

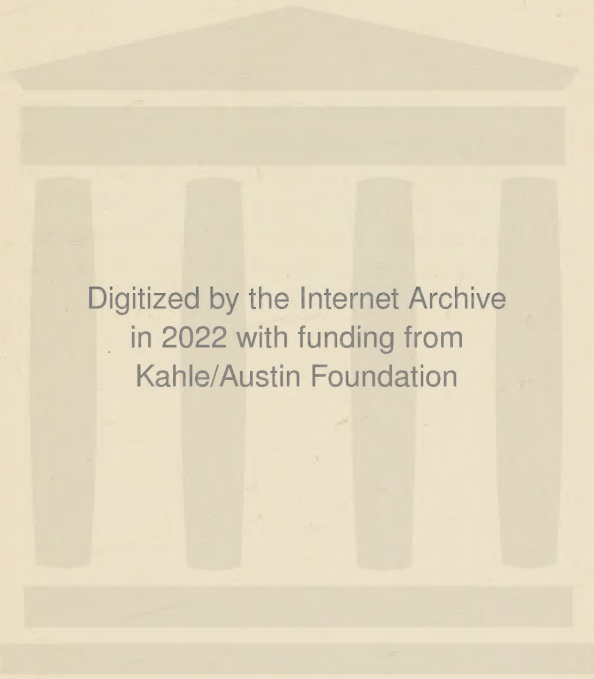
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SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS

VOLUME VIII

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ARNLJOT GELLINE

BY

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON



ESTABLISHED BY
NIELS POULSON

ARNLJOT GELLINE
BY
BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON



TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
I. THE SKI-JOURNEY	3
II. AT THE WINTER-THING	7
III. THE CAPTURE OF INGIGERD	24
IV. THE CLOISTER IN THE SOUTH	32
V. ARNLJOT'S YEARNING FOR THE SEA	35
VI. IN THE MIST OF THE NORTHERN OCEAN	38
VII. THE LURE OF DREAMS	46
VIII. THE SPRING FRESHETS	49
IX. THE SUMMER MARCH	60
X. IN THE CAMP	70
XI. THE KING'S PRAYER	78
XII. THE ARMY AWAKENS	81
XIII. THE COMING OF ARNLJOT	90
XIV. THE BATTLE OF STIKLESTAD	95
XV. THE NIGHT AFTER	115
NOTES	119

INTRODUCTION

THE biographer of Björnson, Christian Collin, characterizes both Björnson and Ibsen as men of "two-story minds," and suggests that herein lies the secret of their power and charm. The foundation-story, in both cases, is built of material quarried from the historical and legendary past of Norway, its sagas, its folk-lore, and its mythology, and in this rich treasure-house of imagery and fundamental motive both poets found the poetical inspiration of their earlier work. Then the ferment of modern thought became active in their minds, and they built their superstructure out of the materials—political or social, intellectual or moral—provided by contemporary life, discussing or envisaging the problems of the modern world in the light of the creative imagination that had come to maturity during their preoccupation with the deep-rooted ideas that were their racial inheritance. Certainly, the outstanding fact in the career of both poets is the transformation in form, if not in spirit, that came over their work at the age of forty or thereabouts. Ibsen spoke of having had many a lyrical Pegasus slain beneath him, and Björnson proclaimed that the best poet a people could have was he who flung himself into the thick of life, and came most closely in touch with his fellow-men.

If, on the other hand, we ask how the two poets are differentiated, it seems fair to say that Björnson's lower story has deeper foundations, and is more solidly built, than Ibsen's, and that his superstructure does not exhibit so

absolute an abandonment of the material previously used. Ibsen's earlier recourse to saga and legend was rather the expression of the romantic temperament than the result of a racial mandate, and the figures of Catiline and Julian the Apostate served his purpose quite as well as those of the warriors of Halogaland. The latter half of his life found him a romanticist turned realist, and that is all. Now Björnson was also a romanticist turned realist, but his romanticism was of the type which only a Norseman could exhibit, and the realist that he afterwards became never wholly lost those racial traits that made him throughout his career preëminently the voice of his people, and made the mention of his name equivalent to the hoisting of the Norwegian flag. He could never be quite the cosmopolitan that Ibsen became, because, however wide-spreading his tree in its foliage, its roots were firmly planted in his native soil, and the sap of its outermost ramifications welled up from that sustaining source. However sophisticated his work became, it never wholly lost the elements of *naïveté* and raciness that marked the earlier manifestations of his genius.

This work of Björnson's first epoch (1857-1872) comprises the peasant-tales, long and short, the five saga and folk dramas, the collection of *Poems and Songs*, and the epic cycle of *Arnljot Gelline*, now translated. *Arnljot Gelline* and the saga-trilogy of *Sigurd Slembe* constitute Björnson's highest achievement in his reconstruction of the heroic past of Norway. The two works are closely akin. Each of them has a protagonist whose presentation is a miracle of creative

power—a figure taken from the saga-literature, and endowed with a warmth and richness of life that the original barely suggests, a life which the poet infused with his own personality, in accordance with the precept which long ago said to the literary artist:

Look in thy heart and write.

So Björnson raised these two legendary figures into the light of day, looked into his own heart for inspiration, and made them the mouthpiece of all that was deepest in him of human sympathy, of devotion to country, and of religious aspiration. It is not often in literature that one can see the creative process so clearly at work as when one compares the scanty and episodical materials furnished by the *Heimskringla* with the warm and vital portraiture of the heroes of these two masterpieces.

Of Björnson's *Arnljot Gellina*, H. H. Boyesen says: "Never has he found a more daring and tremendous expression for the spirit of old Norse paganism than in this powerful but somewhat chaotic poem. Never has any one gazed more deeply into the ferocious heart of the primitive, predatory man, whose free, wild soul had not yet been tamed by social obligations and the scourge of the law." The first reference Björnson makes to this poem in his correspondence is dated October 16, 1859. "I have been at work on a short story [*En Glad Gut*], but have laid it aside to furnish an epic, *Arnljot Gellina*, for *Nyhedsbladets Nytaarsbog*." But the short story was published a full ten years before the completed epic saw the light. A week later

he writes: "At present I am at work upon an epic, *Arnljot Gellina*. I have a clear conception of the subject. I think I shall be successful with it; it is more than half finished; it will probably be published here in a *Nytaarskalendar*." In the summer of 1860 a letter says: "I am enthusiastic about *Arnljot Gelline*. It is undoubtedly the biggest idea I have taken up, and if you don't say, when you have read it all, that it makes a fine and worthy epic, the fault will be yours, as usual." The work seems to have been set aside for some years, although two of the fifteen songs of the cycle were completed and published in the Danish periodical *Aftenlæsning* in 1860-61. A letter of 1864 says that the writer has resumed work upon *Arnljot*, and a letter of 1868 says that it will follow *The Fisher Maiden* and *Sigurd Jorsalfar*. Later in this year Björnson writes to his publisher: "What if we got it out at Christmas? It is my loveliest work." The following year he writes: "It is the best thing I have done. I am now working on the last song, but the whole demands much more work." A letter of April, 1870, directs the publisher to "print it in large type. It moves weightily and must be read slowly;" and a month later comes the following note: "Now I am proud of it. I now have a clear picture of it as a whole, which I did not have before."

Arnljot Gelline was published at the close of 1870, and dedicated to the Folk-High-Schools of the North, as a tribute to Bishop Grundtvig, the guiding spirit of that highly successful educational departure, and one of the strongest influences upon Björnson's own intellectual development.

The poem had occupied him, off and on, for more than ten years, the *Sturm und Drang* period of his early manhood. It had done him the service of the Aristotelian *katharsis*. Of this we read in Collin's biography: "It was indeed for Björnson as if his own sufferings were lightened by comparison with those of Arnljot Gelline and Sigurd Slembe. He could yield up his own little sorrow to these two step-children of destiny, and let it be remoulded into sympathy—just as Shakspeare had transferred his disappointment and pain in a time that was out of joint to Hamlet and Troilus, to Timon and Lear, and thereby freed his mind from brooding upon his own fortunes. Or as the old blind Milton, who after the overthrow of the Puritans was like blind Samson, a captive among the Philistines, could yield up his grief to the Old Testament hero, and through compassion with his suffering, endowing him with the poet's eloquence, was able to rise out of his own despondency. Thus it was that Björnson, in the course of the tempestuous winter of 1859–60, began to shape Arnljot Gelline's figure, making it a conduit for all his thoughts of the wrong of which he was himself the victim. What an emancipation for a poet to free himself from self-compassion, and bestow it upon one far more sorely afflicted by adverse fate, endowing him with all his own vigor of soul, all his own poetic eloquence, erecting in him a monument upon the ruins of a sorrow that the poet had himself experienced!"

The long-promised poem achieved a notable success, although it met with much adverse criticism, especially in Denmark, where it was issued by the house of Gylden-

dal. What Björnson thought of this criticism may be seen from a letter to his publisher, Gyldendal, in which he says: "It seems a shame to me that, with the exception of Dr. Rosenberg, one of the few Norse souls in Copenhagen, there have come to my ears from Denmark only the most perverse judgments of *Arnljot Gelline*. They deal either with the orthography or the rhythms, or concern themselves with what is merely trivial." In the matters of orthography and vocabulary, the poem exhibited many innovations, although it by no means went to the lengths advocated by the *maalstræver*, or champions of a distinctively national form of speech. It was written, as most Norwegian works were and still are, in the literary language of Denmark, but the controversy over the use of Norwegian dialect-forms waxed very fierce about 1870, and orthodox philologists were zealous in their defence of the accepted standards. The poem offers a great variety of rhythms, each of the fifteen Songs having its own characteristic form of verse. Only three of them—the first, the fourth, and the seventh—are rhymed throughout, although Olaf's final exhortation to his followers on the morning of the day of Stiklestad, in the twelfth Song, is also rhymed. The rest of the poem is in what it is now the fashion to call *vers libre*, irregular and rugged, the lines having stresses varying from one to five. The general movement of the verse is trochaic, with the latitude and flexibility offered by a liberal use of dactyls. Alliteration is frequently employed, but not systematically. Careful observation will disclose the fact that the rhythms, however lawless they may seem at times,

give us forms that are rigorously subordinated to definite conceptions, fitted, as only a true poet can fit them, to the dramatic and emotional requirements of the respective Songs.

The present translation has sought to reproduce as closely as may be the rhymes and the rhythms of the original. It is as nearly as possible a line-for-line translation, and its stresses are, in number and position, those of the text, in all but a small minority of cases. Occasionally it has been found necessary to end a line with a single stressed syllable, where the original has a feminine ending. This has been done reluctantly, and only when it has seemed unavoidable except at too great a sacrifice of the meaning. The exigencies of rhyme have made the translation of the sections in which it occurs somewhat less literal than the translator could have wished, but he trusts that he has nowhere departed from the spirit of the original text. If obvious colloquialisms sometimes occur, it must be remembered that Björnson used them also, a fact of which the rhetorical purists among his critics did not fail to remind him. One of the marked characteristics of the poem is its free juxtaposition of prosaic words and phrases with the loftiest forms of poetical expression.

The Notes which have been provided at the close of this volume are not numerous, but they fill many pages because of the lengthy citations from the sagas which are needed for a comparison of Björnson's work with its sources. It seems desirable to make very clear the distinction between what was supplied by the poet's creative imagination and

what he took from the historical record. With this object in view, practically everything in the sagas that he made use of is here reprinted—many chapters of the Saga of Olaf the Holy in the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson, and the two chapters of the Great Olaf Trygvason Saga, drawn upon for the sixth Song. The translator has had before him the original edition of 1870 as well as later reprints of the poem. These reprints embody no changes of any consequence, except in the orthography. Much use has been made of J. Mörland's commentary (*Om Björnstjerne Björnson's "Arnljot Gelline"*) in the preparation of the Notes. The translator is also indebted to Miss Hanna Astrup Larsen for many helpful suggestions concerning the text.

WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE

Chicago, February, 1917

ARNLJOT GELLINE
BY
BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON

FIRST SONG
THE SKI-JOURNEY

HOW they go hurrying,
How they go scurrying!
Three men on a single pair of ski;
Rushing past village, and mountain, and tree,
Stormy skies and clear,
And the Yule-tide near,
See the vale below them, dotted with its lights!

How they go hurrying,
How they go scurrying!
Iamtlanders follow, a drunken rout,
Unleashing their bloodhounds, to scent them out,
As the bright moonlight
Floods the wintry night—
Black lie the shadows cast by the forest.

How they go hurrying,
How they go scurrying!
Doomed to the altar, a messenger pair,
Cared for and fattened, now free do they fare,
Christian men twain,
Catch them again!
Hungriely howl the ancient wolves of Odin.

How they go hurrying,
How they go scurrying!

On the ski they stand but at shoulder-height
Of their rescuer's frame, as, wild with fright,
 They fare forspent,
 While on safety bent,
Strikes he still onward, as were he alone.

 How they go hurrying,
 How they go scurrying!
Through the deep-drifted snow in their headlong flight,
Lost to men's view as they flee through the night,
 Past wild beast and troll,
 Now they speed toward their goal—
Halt! Yonder a hovel half-hid in the forest.

 How they went hurrying,
 How they went scurrying!
In they crept, kindled fire 'gainst the winter's rigor,
Food he set forth, and restored them to vigor,
 Then landed with a leap
 On the loft for sleep,
Heaving men and weapons up before him.

 How they went hurrying,
 How they went scurrying!
Then came the Iamtlanders' footsore pack,
Leaping and yelping, the hounds in their track,
 The bones found and pawed,
 Nosed them and gnawed;
Men and dogs soon were all snoring in sleep.

How they went hurrying,
How they went scurrying!
In came a troll-wife, her hunger to sate,
Killed she the dogs, roasted them and ate,
One by one the men
Cast in the fire, and then
Greedily devoured, still smelling for more.

How they went hurrying,
How they went scurrying!
From the loft a man doth a spear-shaft launch
In through her back and out through her paunch;
Shrieking and quaking,
The spear-shaft shaking,
Bellowing the troll rushed out into the forest.

How they go hurrying,
How they go scurrying!
Three men on a single pair of ski,
Rushing past village, and mountain, and tree,
Stormy skies and clear,
And the Yule-tide near,
Norway lies below them dotted with its lights.

How they go hurrying,
How they go scurrying!
“Here is your country, you now are secure;
Greet King Olaf, for him ’t is sure

That above all men
Would I choose for friend,
To him with my greetings give this silver dish."

How they go hurrying,
How they go scurrying!
Under his gold helm streams his hair,
In the fanning wind, as away he doth fare,
And his warrior-height
Towers in sight
Above the birches on the grassy mountain-slope.

SECOND SONG

AT THE WINTER-THING

YEAR upon year apace had sped
Since that ski-journey up north;
The fugitives were forgotten,
And the pursuing pack.
Other things weighed on men's minds:
Dearth and the lifting of cattle,
Depression wherever twain met,
At every fireside silence.

The old trees shook in the storm,
Winter ruled o'er the plain,
The peasants' corn in the fields
Was beaten down by the frost.
Laden with snow was the spruce,
But the birch shook the burden off.
Bent was the underbrush,
And frozen stiff with the cold.
Sated was winter, and harkened
For signs of the storms to come,
Should they bring with them rain,
Or a message warm from the south.
Over the gasping village
The frost-king heavily brooded,
Crept to the bonder's dwelling,
Staring sleepily in.

Over the gloomy foothills
The dark clouds heavily lowered,
Hung together and whispered
Their eternal message of terror.

Up from the west they came rolling
Over the forests of Iamtland;
White behind them lay Norway
Gleaming with snow-clad peaks.

'T was there that Olaf the Holy
The cross to the light uplifted;
Thor dropped his hammer, and Odin
Tottered and fell in the night.

Rumors were rife. In Iamtland
Often they found their way
To the hearing of gentle maidens
And of deep-thinking men;
Filling their dreams with omens,
Warning them in the daytime,
Glimmering like snow in sunlight
Before their uncertain gaze.

In the Iamtlanders' low-lying settlement,
There lay on the edge of the forest
The house of the heathen priest,
Snug and warm for the wanderer.
Trand was his name, one daughter

Alone he possessed, but no son,
Nor was he deeply regretful
When blithe she passed on his way.
Old sat Trand on the settle,
Drinking far into the night,
Talking with trustworthy boon companions
Of the deeds of their youth.
Also he talked with travellers,
Homeward faring from westward,
Asked about Olaf Digre,
And of his mighty deeds.
Heard how he cast down temples,
And smashed their idols to fragments,
How worms crawled out of the rotten wood,
Adders, and mice, and the like. . . .
The thrall stood pale at the doorway,
Dared not the horn replenish,
Terrified picturing Odin, who
Noseless sat there and slept.
Drunkenly Trand thumped the table:
"Lies are these tales and witchcraft-work!
Tallow-face, fetch us the liquor,
Here it grows fearfully cold."
Further questions he asked,
Pondering o'er the replies,
Pounded the table and swore:
"Loki has broken his bonds!"
Then when the drink overcame him,
And down on the settle he dropped,

Saw he the vision of Olaf Digre
Majestic in Odin's seat,
Vowed 't was a wile of the Jotuns,
Sought to strike out with his fist,
Failed him the effort, then sank he
Down in a drunken sleep.

Midwinter at hand, and the cattle
Bellowed and lowed in their stalls,
Knowing the sledge sacrificial
Stood all ready to smite.
The horses whinnied, at halters strained,
Turned away from their fodder,
Bloodthirsty Odin they scented,
And his croaking attendant ravens.
The folk all gathered together,
More than the place could lodge,
Filled all the houses and barns,
And the booths that were built to bestow them.
By day there were altar-offerings,
And drinking deep in the night.
Lawman Tore had come,
Three days had the Thing held session.
Truce was proclaimed, grievances aired,
The law was laid down, and the tribute
Prepared for the Swedish king,
To whom was pledged their support.
The twilight of eve was at hand,
When Lawman Tore arose,

Demanded aloud of the circle
If there were further complaints.
Jumping up in a moment
Many there were who shouted:
“Highwaymen and hungry robbers
Steal both our goods and cattle.
The worst is Arnljot Gelline,
And the man called Gauta-Tore.
Ne’er can the Iamtlanders live in peace,
While those twain are alive.”

A man then rose up among them,
So tall that they all shrank backward,
No one reached to his shoulder,
Flung he aside his cowl,
Golden his helmet, his cloak
Blazed with a brilliant scarlet,
A mighty sword at his side,
A spear-shaft clenched in his hand.
The moon broke forth in the heavens,
Raising its yellow lantern,
Lighted his face for a moment,
Revealing it clear, and went out.
Wild cried the folk, drew their swords:
“Arnljot Gelline, ay, it is he!
Varg i veum, what wilt thou here?
Dost yearn for the sight of Hel?”
Swords were singing and shields were ringing,
Surged the folk like a mountain-torrent;

Steadfast stood Gelline,
Shouted above the crowd:
“Many the mail-clad men
Who have followed me here to the Iamt-
landers’ Thing;
Good folk, I would quietly speak;
Later the time for blows.”
Swung he the spear and smiled
Proud as a god in the grove,
The bonders shrank back, but muttered
Heavily words of defiance.
Breaking was unloosed upon them
The tempest that heralds the strife,—
Then arose Lawman Tore,
Rapping for silence and heed.

Old he stood there and mighty,
Looked at the Iamtlanders all around,
As were he regretfully seeking
Faces of olden times,
Or as heard he stirring to meet him
The tremulous stream of irresolute thoughts
Groping for strength and courage.
Despondent and dim was his gaze;
Slowly he bowed his head. Then fell
Sorrowful words from his lips,
Hopeless as autumn rains.
“Rife in these latter days are rumors
Of how it is that in Norway

Olaf, of men known as Digre,
Fashions with new-shaped law.
And it must be admitted
Ours is wasting away.
Here where outlawry is banned
Stands a man of shameful misdeeds.
Odin now has grown old,
Is sorely afflicted with coughing,
Else had he spoken to-day
In words that had put you to shame.
But if his law shall be silenced
Here in the Iamtlanders' Thing,
Then also must Tore be silent,
All of whose life was law.
Speak then, thou Arnljot Gelline,
Whom the Iamtlanders rather would list.
Herewith is the Thing-session over,
Lawman ye have no more."

Down he stepped, with trembling hand
Grasping the ancient law-book,
Withholding a farewell gesture,
Turned he about and went.

As a cloud, gray-woven, storm-laden,
Hangs o'er the boughs of the forest,
Weighed Lawman Tore's words
Heavily on his hearers' mood.
Bent stood the men, and silent,

Wrapped in shame and remorse.
Each man his past life scanned,
Mindful of words of the fathers.
Memories awakened and gleamed,
Striking their way through the gloom,
Swords leaped forth, and forward
The crowd again pressed its way.
With pale face Arnljot Gelline,
Calmly facing his hearers,
Rapping for silence, addressed them:
“Let me have speech first of all!”
Then at his right hand’s gesture,
The men who by him stood nearest
Cast off their cloaks, revealing
Armor and gleaming swords.
As when at night through the window
Unexpected the lightning flashes,
Upon the throng fell a silence,
His every word was clear.

“Robber you called me when hither I came....
But you forget, Iamtlanders,
That first *you* robbed me of all
That made life precious to me.
Highwayman also you called me,
But you forget, Iamtlanders,
That *you* in treacherous highwayman fashion
Burned down my father’s farmstead.
Murderer also you called me,

But you forget, Iamtlanders,
That my old father *you* slew
While in his sleep he lay.

“My father fared hither from far-off shores,
Unloaded his ships and bought a farm,
Quietly lived in the village,
Unknown and making no friends.
He broke his acres and sowed them,
Cattle he brought to the market,
Cleared new soil in the forest,
Gaining both goods and gold.
In the village envy enkindled
Seared his fair name and report,
Maligned him for witchcraft and cattle-lifting,
Harried his kindly nature.
When on that stormy winter night
The ring disappeared from Odin’s hand,
Him ’t was you named, demanding
For Odin speedy revenge.
Straight from the temple-gateway
You swept like fire through the forest,
On to his high-timbered house,
Burned him within it, and laughed.

“Hear from me now, all ye Iamtland men,
Of the things that happened that night:
Vikar of Tiundaland, my brother,
Dragged me out in the cold.

Bare-legged we trudged through the snow,
But when we came to Torsvold,
Saw we the fire upleaping,
Heard we the shrieks of anguish.
The women fled, and the cattle
Madly rushed into the flames.
Brightly the corn was burning,
The barnyard-fowl flapped their wings,
To the glee of trolls fell the roof-tree,
High laughed the flames to the heavens,
My father lay there beneath them,
Breathing a prayer for revenge.
Vikar was fourteen winters
Old, and eight I had seen,
But when from Torsvold we departed
Full-grown men were we both.

“Of the forty we saw there reddened
In the light of the funeral pyre,
Pale now have waxed nine and thirty,
Ne’er will they redden again.
But the last of them here now is sitting,
Respected, and living in comfort;
To him once more will I speak,
Ere I depart this night.—

“Hear, Iamtlanders: ye took my father,
Drove me out in the snow,
Quenched all the joy in my life,

Vengeance bequeathed in its stead.
Of fosterland also you robbed me,
Stranger I roam through the world,
Holding all men as my foemen,
Since the day of my brother's death.

“For you took too my only brother,
Vikar of Tiundaland; he fared
To join him with Olaf Trygvason,
Sued for baptism and cleansing.
Darkened was life grown for him;
First on the red day of Svolder
Smiled he for once in his life,
Sent homeward his greetings, and fell.

“Like a long-haired, sore-smitten wolf
Drag I about my heavy loss,
And from my gaping wounds
Blood-stained is all my track.
Which of us stands in the other's debt?
Which can demand an accounting?
Iamtlanders all, to me is your debt
Far more than a life is worth.

“At times when alone I am sitting
In the deep forests yonder,
Gazing at even out over
All of your dwellings fair—
The gleaming lights from your windows,

Flooding the night with peace,
Speak of the dawn of the morrow
For the day-wearied man—
Then over my spirit low-flying
Sweep the downy birds of longing,
Keen in pursuit of the spring;
Failing to find it, they die.
Then feel I no longer hatred,
Although to death I was wounded,
Silently shines the starlight
Down on my strenuous life.
Vikar then in my mind's eye rises,
Just as he stood there of yore;
Into his great blue eyes
Once more I sit and gaze.

“Sitting there into hers I gaze
Whom once on the ice I rescued,
Blue were they also, like Vikar's,
Therefore they draw me in thought.
And in such hours I may say,
Peace is well worth the winning;
All of my hopes and longings now
Will I stake on a single throw.

“Iamtlanders all, now hear me well,
Since I have come to you hither:—
Are you as weary as Arnljot Gelline
Of all this treacherous warfare;

Is your mood heavy as his?
Since the day you bereft him
Of country and law and birthright,
Of your own have you felt secure?
Well, then grant him his one demand:
Ingigerd, Trand's daughter, and her goods,
Also the right to law and country,—
And here shall be peace again.
Trand, you were there on that bloody night,
'Tis yours to atone—now answer!
'Tis Ingigerd's long and yellow hair
That has stayed my hand till to-day."

Silence held sway all around him,
Kindled were lights, and illumined
Questioning faces and lowered swords;
Round about was the night.

Arnljot waited, but ne'er a word
Pierced through the silence; he watched. . . .
Thoughts rising and falling in billows
Swept o'er the mind of the folk.
Slowly over that sea of thought
Dawned the blue-gray of the future—
Either the day of appeasement,
Or a flashing of northern lights;
Either she of the yellow hair
And the languishing deep blue eyes,
Or the bearded wild men of the forest,

Camped by their fires at night;
Either the iron-sheathed plough
Marking with furrows the soil,
Or the drawing of swords,
To bite the bodies of men;
Either beneath the low roof-tree
The altar-fires of love,
Or the sable ravens of vengeance
Hoarsely croaking around his helm;
Either dream-blessed sleep every night
After a day without care,
Or wrath in its pitiless rage
Ravaging his foeman's land.

Then one among them whispered, "Trand" —
As the wind rustles the branches
Shaking off rain-drops, all muttered:
"Trand, where is Trand? Ay, Trand!"

This so sudden and passionate call
Craved but one boon from his speech:
He should yield up his daughter
In pledge for their goods and cattle.
The ancient farmstead of his forbears,
All his inheritance with it,
Should with Ingigerd's snow-white hand
On the highwayman now be bestowed.
Hardly a home in the village
Bore not the mark of Arnljot's sword,

Ruddier yet than his scarlet cloak
Ran the blood from his name.
Stood he there with soft-spoken words,
But the rank of his bloodthirsty crew
Closed like a ring of fire
Round about the proffered peace.
Now should the old man his daughter
Lay in this sinister ring—
Like a sacrificial offering
Doomed to the glowing pyre?
Straight she had grown on the farmstead,
Ripened like corn in the sunshine,
Blithely welcomed its kindly light
Through the window stealing each morning;
Like a fanciful legend she crept
Into his serious musings,
Bringing both tears and laughter
Into his strenuous mood.
“Trand!” rose the cry, “what sayest thou, Trand?”
Dull the swords fell, and the shields
Rang, while, intent on the barter,
Pressed they all of them forward.
Trand stood pale in the torchlight. . . .
She who bore all the hope of his race
Hid in her blushing thought,
She should be offered up?
She who stood for the only hope
At eventide left to his life,
Should now like a new-kindled light be quenched

In a draught from an open door?
She who laughed where her mother lived,
Recalling the days of his youth,
She should be doomed to wither away,
Torn from her soil by the root?—

Rose to an uproar the shouts and blows,
Reëchoed from every side,
On the stone he must mount,
However might fail him speech.
Terror-stricken, with downcast eyes,
He gazed as upon a dove-cote,
For there stood the daughter before the temple,
With a flock of women around her!
Thralls stood about, with torches uplifted;
Hushed were all at the sight:
Thereupon in Trand's bosom
The blood rose surging and boiling.
With flashing eye, and quivering lip,
Cheeks red at the shameful thought,
Down he sprang, cleft a path through the ring,
With youthful vigor renewed,
Straight to his daughter he forced his way,
Raised her up on his shoulder:
"Lift high your torches, thralls,
That they all may behold her!
Deem ye, Iamtlanders, that such a child
May be traded for goods and cattle?
Deem'st thou her, Arnljot Gelline,

Fit for a highwayman's bride?"
But over her father's shoulder
Ingigerd darted a gentle smile,
Fair as the blush of the dawning
On the ash-gray peak of the mountain.
Her hands she clasped round his head,
In his belt she planted her feet,
Never a strong man's shoulder
A nobler burden bore!

How then were shamed the Iamtlanders,
Exultantly bearding Gelline:
"Every man of us here will defend her,
Take her from us, if you can!"

THIRD SONG

THE CAPTURE OF INGIGERD

FOURTEEN nights later Trand and his farmstead
Went up in flames;
The night was calm and the buildings were ancient,
All was soon done.
Only the women-folk and the farmstead cattle
Were saved from the fire.
The men who sought to flee through the smoke
Fell in their tracks.
The threat at the Thing
Fulfilment delayed not.

Before the settlement folk could assemble,
All was over.
From the flames out into the forest
Bore they the booty,
Carried the corn and drove the cattle,
Clearing their way;
Forward forged Arnljot, Ingigerd resting
Light in his arms. . . .
But her tear-drops
On his face were falling.

While all around was tumult and laughter,
Softly he whispered:
"Lately, indeed, O fair-haired maiden,
Wooed I in vain;

Now art thou borne from the wedding-banquet,
Circled with fire;
The betrothal ale is spilled in the snow,
Mingled with blood.
Vengeful is Arnljot,
Fiery his love.

“Now is the goal of all my desires,
Now can we turn
Trusting to *Olaf*, avowing our fealty,
Now can we fare
To whatever spot thou would'st raise thy roof-tree,
Tear-melting bride!
Ours is the world, thy morning-gift
Whate'er thou desirest.
Thou hast but to name it,
Straightway 'tis thine.”

Naught then she named, nothing she answered,
Downcast her gaze. . . .
Then he embraced her more closely, and whispered:
“If 'tis thy will,
Now shall we fly from the world and all others,
Building our home
Afar from the crowd and alone like the eagle,
Perchance by the sea,
Embracing, and learning
The secret of joy.”

Her head she lifted up then, and proudly
 Rose she erect;
The northern lights played o'er the starry arch,
 Icily cold
Was the air of the night; seeking the distance
 Pale was her gaze.—
“Speak, thou proud beauty, yon night on the ice-pack
 Wert thou not silent;
 Those tear-smitten eyes
 With meaning were rich.”

Angrily raised she her head; her bosom
 Heaved like the sea;
Higher and higher the billows of passion
 Surged, as she whispered:
“No man as thee I loved aforetime;
 Thou truly hast seen.
None henceforth shall I hate more deeply,
 More fiercely than thee.”—
And the source of her tears
On the instant was dried.

Smiled then Arnljot, in words replying
 Low-spoken like hers:
“Mournest thou sore for thy fallen father,
 Mourn I as well.
Each of us now has won what he willed,
 Won his revenge;
Our union this night shall be as atonement

For the death of our fathers,
The courses of wrath
Joining together."

"Never the day that shall find me forgetful
Of what thou hast done.

Ne'er to thee wife will I be or leman;
Dare what thou may'st!"

"Fair is woman when thus she rages;
The impotent storm
Quickens my breast, and acts as a soothing
Salve to my soul.
Speak thou till wearied,
So thou dost clasp me!"

"Impotent none who for fear doth not cower,
My cause has allies:
Break, if thou canst, my will; I summon
Death to my aid."

"Die shalt thou not in thy fairest springtime,
Within thy grasp
Many the youthful years and fruitful
Yet thou shalt know.
Death claims life's autumn,
Spring now is calling."

"Thinkest thou women like cattle are lifted?
Deluded man.
The will that faithfully shall warm thee

Ne'er canst thou force."

"Ay, I will seize what thou withholdest;

Firm is my faith

That naught that is living will not bow down to
Arnljot's will.

Power can threaten,

Power can charm."

"Nay, one thing is living, its name is hatred;

Ne'er hast thou heard:

Power is mighty, love is mightier,
Mightiest hate."

"Never has hate availed to stay me,

Rather it has

Roused my courage and spurred my anger,
Turned it to scorn.

Hardens the hated

Warrior to chieftain."

"Wilt thou descendants on hatred nurtured?

Wilt thou have seed

Vowed by their mother to purpose vengeful
For all she has borne?"

"Threats are ugly; but strong my race-stock;

Ne'er will avail thee

Efforts to make my offspring curse me:

Men beget men,

When they my deeds see,

Love me they must!"

Neared was the forest, the mighty tree-trunks
 Greeting bestowed;
Roofing them over, shadows about them,
 Murmuring peace.
Here embraced he the fair one closely,
 Clasped to his breast!
Tore she away from him, breaking out in
 Bitterest tears,
 Hands appealing
 She lifted to heaven.

“Power hast thou to work thy will,
 But all thou gainest
Is like my father to strike me down,
 Only my loss,
Little by little, and tear upon tear,
 Only my grief,
Silently melting my life like snow,
 Sigh upon sigh,
 Until the last of them
 In the sand is blotted.”

“Speak not thus, come, rest thee upon me,
 Think how for thee
Kindly I'll care, in my arms protect thee,
 Even as now,
All through thy life, to the burial-grove
 Where we shall be laid.
Ne'er did I plead, nor now am I pleading,

But here on thy bosom
Confess I that humble
Makes me thy love."

"Humble he is not who yet doth hold me
Against my will.
Warm with my father's blood how darest thou
Breathe words of love?
Release me, thy hand like the pyre doth burn me
This night that burned.
Bear me to death, to dishonor bear me,
Show now thy power,
Iamtland's warrior,
Over a woman!"

The train drew near, and noise and laughter
Rang through the forest;
He took her up, and away he leaped
Into the gloom.
Silent she sat on his arm, nor heard he
Aught save her sobbing;—
Whereat slowly his stride was slackened,
Until he stood still,
Listened and waited,
Silent and redeless.

"Strength goes out of me, now thou art silent;
Threaten me rather!"
"Nay, no longer I threaten, thou from me

Hast stolen the strength.
How hast thou betrayed me, against me how sinned!
Oh, let me go!
Else drag me down to death and dishonor,
Be quick, make an end! .
Life for me is over,
Before 'tis begun."

"Goest thou, Ingigerd, then dies out forever
The light from my life."
"Mine died out when this night was kindled
Fire in our home.
What thou bearest is but the ashes,
Strew them abroad
Over thy path like a corpse-gray carpet. . . .
May it adorn
And deck with glory
Thy chieftain track."

Amidst the noise and laughter about him
Lifted he her
Free from his arms and gently set her
Down at his feet.
Spoke not a word, but set his gaze only
Where yonder she passed,
Wending back toward the fire-scarred farmstead,
The mountain-side down.
And still he stood there
When she had vanished.

FOURTH SONG

THE CLOISTER IN THE SOUTH

“WHO would enter so late the cloister in?”

“A maid forlorn from the land of snow.”

“What sorrow is thine, and what thy sin?”

“The deepest sorrow the heart can know.

I have nothing done,

Yet must still endeavor,

Though my strength be none,

To wander ever.

Let me in, to seek for my pain surcease,

I can find no peace.”

“From what far-off land hast thou taken flight?”

“From the land of the North, a weary way.”

“What stayed thy feet at our gate this night?”

“The chant of the nuns, for I heard them pray,

And the song gave peace

To my soul, and blessed me;

It offered release

From the grief that oppressed me.

Let me in, so if peace to give be thine,

I may make it mine!”

“Name me the grief that thy life hath crossed.”

“Rest may I never, never know.”

“Thy father, thy lover, thou hast then lost?”

“I lost them both at a single blow,

And all I held dear
In my deepest affection;
Ay, all that was near
To my heart's recollection.
Let me in, I am failing, I beg, I implore,
I can bear no more."

"How was it that thou thy father lost?"

"He was slain, and I saw the deed."

"How was it that thou thy lover lost?"

"My father he slew, and I saw the deed.
I wept so bitterly
When he roughly would woo me,
He at last set me free,
And forbore to pursue me.
Let me in, the horror my soul doth fill,
That I love him still."

Chorus of nuns within the lighted church

Come child, come bride,
To God's own side,
From grief find rest
On Jesus' breast.
Rest thy burden of sorrow
On Horeb's height;
Like the lark, with the morrow
Shall thy soul take flight.

Here stilled is all yearning,
No passion returning;
No terror come near thee
Where the Saviour can hear thee.
For He, if in need be
Thy storm-beaten soul,
Though it bruised as a reed be,
Shall raise it up whole.

FIFTH SONG

ARNLJOT'S YEARNING FOR THE SEA

FOR the sea, the sea, my spirit is yearning,
Where wide it heaves in its calm majestic.
Bearing its burden of mountainous fog-banks,
Eternally rolling in self-communion.
Though the heavens bend down, and the shores are calling,
It is restless ever, and knows no yielding.
In the nights of summer, the winter tempests,
It voices ever its plaint of longing.

For the sea, for the sea, my spirit is yearning,
Where wide it raises its frigid forehead!
Upon it the world casts its darksome shadow,
And all its murmuring sorrow mirrors.
But also the sun gives it light-warm greeting,
And blithely tells of the joy of living.
Yet moodily quiet, and ice-cold ever
In its depths are swallowed comfort and sorrow.

The full moon draws it, the hurricane stirs it,
But they lose their grasp, and on streams the water.
The lowlands are melted, the highlands crumble,
As even it sweeps on its way eternal.
What it draws with it, its course must follow,
What sinks beneath, is submerged forever.
No cry is heard, and there comes no message,
And its own speech may none interpret.

Far out to the sea reaches forth my spirit,
The sea, that knows not an hour's appeasement!
For all who sigh, 't is the sure deliverer;
But bears its own riddle forever onward,
Keeping with death this pact mysterious,
That all it gives him, save itself only!

I am urged, O sea, by thy melancholy,
To cast aside all my weary scheming,
And let take flight all my anxious longings:
Thy cold waters shall lave my bosom.
Let death come, for his prey low-lurking:
A space is left us still for our playing!
Some hours I'll filch from thy covetous keeping
Cleaving onward in angry passion,
Thou shalt but fill my straining mainsail
With thy tempest-breath of destruction,
Thy raging billows shall bear more swiftly
My little craft into quiet waters.

What if I stand alone at the rudder,
Forsaken by all, and by death forgotten,
Watching stranger sails from the distance wafted,
And others gliding by in the night-time,
What if alone I list to the ground-swell,
—The sigh of the ocean, its breath deep-drawing—
To its waves as they ripple against the timbers
—In pastime relieving its melancholy!
Then shall be washed away my longings,

And merged in the sea-deep sorrows of nature,
Then the cold of the sea and the night-time
For the kingdom of death my soul shall strengthen.

Now dawns the day! Renewed my courage;
My heart leaps up to the light and the heavens.
My ship snuffs the breeze, and lays its broadside
Exultant against the foaming billows.
Singing the boy clambers up to the masthead,
To set the sail with the wind now swelling,
And my thoughts race ever like sea-birds weary
About spar and rigging, but find no foothold. . . .
To the sea, to the sea! thither fared Vikar!
Like him to sail, like him plunge downward
At the prow of my ship in the cause of Olaf!
My ice-cold mood with my sharp keel cleaving,
With the lightest zephyr my hope renewing!
Upon the helm death's clammy fingers,
And the light of heaven upon my pathway!
And then all at once in the final hour
To note the nails in my timbers yielding,
And death bearing down on the sundered planking
And the saving flood of the sea in-rushing!
Then to lie down in my clouts all dripping,
And be lowered amain to the silence eternal,
While my name to the shore will roll with the billows
In the silent nights made bright by the moonbeams.

SIXTH SONG

IN THE MIST OF THE NORTHERN OCEAN

DEATH's coast is it that now looms before us?
Ne'er have I met with a darkness like this.
Night sinks upon us as though never to rise again;
For weeks in a circle we sail.

The roar of breakers against the cliffs
Wildly dashing we hear through the mist.
By the currents driven among ice-bound islands,
Fly we, but know not whither.

There are times when we who are sailing together
Lose sight of each other, nothing hearing
Save the roar of the death-dealing reefs that below
 us lie lurking,
Or perchance a blowing whale.

Ne'er see we men, or sails, or house-roofs,
About the wild mountains sea-fowl screaming,
Monsters of the sea around on the drifting ice-pack,
All in a dim gray light.

Lights in the heaven like ranks of spears,
Seen when the fog clears away,—they tremble,
Flashing and flaming, they streak the sky, and they
 dart,
Then gather into a sheaf.

Once again with their playing points
They cross one another from either side,
Stream and kindle, lighting the arch of heaven,
Divide, and flicker, and dart.

Darkness again, in the dark a death-cry.
Came it from us, or was it a warning?
The menace lies here by the side of the ship—
 row on!
Fear knew ye not ere now.

See, a boat with but one man in it!
Madly he rows 'gainst the stormy current.
Row, my men, we are a hundred, he but one,
Row, we must see who he is!

Ho! now upsets he the boat—is gone!
No, he is *there*, on the other quarter!
Again he chokes in the wave,—see, now he is
 there!
Onward! heed him not!

Far away are we from Bretland's mead-horns,
Far from the church-bells in Irish steeples,
Is yonder a tempest, driving dark from the west?
Then is our doom made sure.

Who can say, who knows whither we're faring?
Another gleaming ice-peak rises;

Scud! List to leeward the wild beasts of the break-
ers—About!
Put out to sea once more!

Who is he sitting there among you,
Right in the midmost thwart? Give answer!
Mark him, standing out like a leaf-crowned tree
'gainst the sky,
About him the fog now lifts.

Light streams forth from his face and helmet,
Blue is his vesture, and red is he bearded,
About plays the lightning. See you his shoulders,
his neck,
See you the flash of his eye!

“Man of might, who art thou, where are we?
For weeks we sail in the night 'midst wonders.
How was it thou cam'st on board, and what wilt
thou with us—
Is it death thou bringest, or life?”

Answered he, and the sea waxed calm:
“*Here* lie the waters thy soul was seeking
What time thy wish was ever the sea to roam!
Here is waging the mightiest strife.

“Well know I the land from the great days olden
When hither I came and slew the giants.

Behold them here standing, to ice-mountains frozen,
Overthrown in the sea.

“I it was who smote with my hammer
When my followers called upon me,
Swore by my ruddy beard, and made sacrifice,
In the hammer finding their shield.

“Warlocks twain here for years found refuge,
Ranged the land with their mighty besoms,
Swept my followers into the ocean, striking
Heaven and sea with storms.

“In a sea-filled mountain fissure I found them,
Blocked it up, since then they have stayed there;
Set then to rights a few small matters that vexed,
Here now reigns a fitting peace.

“I it was who urged thee up northward;
Too worthy thou art yon to be spent.
Here, where swelling in fury the sea thou canst
hear,
Is the place for a man of deeds.

“Lately the tempest raged through the West,
Then was it I who was passing over.
Lightnings flashed as the storm swept over the
valley,
Then was it I who came.

“Follow thou me—in that course is salvation.

Thee will I own, thou Northland warrior!

Me hast thou worshipped, unwitting, whenever in
battle

Men to me thou hast sent.

“Here on the coasts of death storm-stricken,

Here can I show myself, here can speak to thee;

Give thyself to me, and thee on the horns of lightning
Will I raise to eternal life.

“The life of honor, o’er death triumphant,

Through the clammy fog a way sharp-cleaving,

Shining bright each day as the sunshine of the gods
On mankind and his grief.”

“Fair art thou, and thy speech consoling,

The coasts of death lie indeed before us,

Far more blissful to rise with thee to honor,
Than sink in the ice-cold sea.

“Where then lies it, that shining shore?

Who art thou, that can lead me thither?

Ne’er will I trust myself and faith to thy word,
See must I and understand.”

“Fight with me, and my name thou knowest!”

Answered the other, erect uprising.

“Exalted in death upon heaven’s warrior-shield,

All will be clear to thy sight.

“Come, live the warrior-life of the valiant dead,
Fall on the battle-field, rise up to the banquet!
Skalds shall sing of thy name at the table of the gods,
Later itself it will sing.”

Answered Arnljot: “If but to strife
Shall I from the coasts of death be carried,
To battle unending without danger and aimless,
Sink will I rather here.

“A vain thing seems to me the gods’ existence,
Day after day to fight for the sake of fighting,
Feigning to fall, rising up, and renewing the feint—
That is not life, but sport.

“Lift my life to the sunlit uplands!
Hast thou no reply to the thousand questions
Born of my need, of my woe, of my burning anger,
Then give me the silence of death.”

“*Silence, fool!*”—From on high the cry came booming.
Trembled the men, ’twas the voice of the thunder,
Darker it grew, nor above, nor ahead, could they see,
Stricken with fear by the voice.

“Outcast then in the night shalt thou struggle!
Him who rejoices not in the battle
No valkyrie shall lift up to life; he is dead,—
Barred from the warrior’s ring.”

As of overthrown mountains, the tempest's crash
Shook the sea and the earth and the heavens,
The long-ship lay like a leaf, while the billows cast
A veil o'er the warriors' eyes.

Alone he there amidships stood. . . .
But above the sea and the thunderous fury
Caught they a glimpse of two scurrying giant maidens
Raking things all in a heap,

For with their long and sweeping besoms
Unloosed they the floods, the ocean drenching,
Space could not hold such a terror as spread then around,
Moaning 'midst ashes and dust.

But at the ship's side the troll as before
Rowed along, all alone in his boat,
Upset it and sank, and again appeared on the surface. . . .
Ever waxed fiercer the storm.

They made no headway, for all their strength,
Death-weary, the warriors sank from the thwarts,
The mast was snapped, cast off or splintered the rudder—
They drove straight on to the cliffs.

In their utmost need they called to their leader:
"Rescue us now, thou of help so scornful!
Is thy faith so firm in thyself, then delay not,
Show that to save it avails."—

“Faith in myself I have!” Then leaping
From thwart to cliff-side, he cried: “Now follow!
Gifted with courage, a man is conquered not, though he
fall;
Show that the gift is yours!”

Leaped the warriors, one after another,
Some fell in, were engulfed by the waters,
Others with faith in their conquering strength set foot
Firm on the cliff-side and stood.

SEVENTH SONG

THE LURE OF DREAMS

WORN by the desperate voyage and dreary,
Under the trees thou liest weary.

Now art thou bewailing
The freedom missed in thy dreamful sailing.

Now hast thou for wending
Endless ways, frustration unending.

Now?

Whither beckons thy doom?

Yielding thee up—but to what and to whom?

Seest thou where her veil she raises

With her fair white hands, upreaching

To the throne of grace, and gazes

Fervently in her beseeching?

Like doves homing

Are the prayers she breathes when roaming

Through earth's byways,

As she seeks the heavenly highways,

Notes of love divinely cooing,

In her bosom peace renewing.

Thou?—Driven onward, thy burden bearing,

Knowing no helper, or whither art faring.

Through fog-banks thou goest

Aimless and blind, and no guidance thou knowest.

On dost thou mind thee?

All that thou dost but the tighter doth bind thee.

Say!

What is thy goal?

What is the course that shall save thee thy soul?

Hear'st thou, where in rapture quiring,

With other maiden voices blending,

Yearning hers soars up, aspiring,

Toward the bliss that is unending?

Sorrows crushing

Are the water-springs low-singing,

Radiant gushing,

All their dews as offerings bringing.

Life and strength alike thou hast wasted,

Of craft and vengeance the bitterness tasted;—

Peace thou hast sought for,

Fumbling with blood-stained hands hast fought for;

Impulses driving

Urge but to evil and death-empty striving.

No!

Way is there none

That leads to the goal to thy vision shown.

See how for thee she is praying,

On her bended knees now planted!

“In his sinful pathway straying,

Be to him salvation granted!” . . .

How unfailing

O'er all sinful dreams prevailing,

See her raising

Hands to God, rapt upward gazing:

“Saviour, God, do not forsake me,

For Thee yearning, to Thee take me!”

Aimless thy course against destiny beating,
Fallen and outcast;—set thee a meeting
With death on the morrow!
So make an end of thy need and thy sorrow.
On eternity verging,
Thy life without content in nothingness merging.
Have done!
The past dost thou rue,
Naught better the future reveals to thy view.
“Up I soar, my longings sating,
All to Thee now consecrating.
Enraptured doth my soul confess Thee,
More and more I would possess Thee.
My heart hath brought me
To the faith that Thou hast taught me,
Now I surely
Rest my hopes in heaven securely; . . .
Welcome them, accept, renew them,
Soon shall I be gathered to them!”

EIGHTH SONG

THE SPRING FRESHETS

WINTER it was not, it was not spring,
Rainfall time,
Weeks of down-pouring, of snow-banks melting.
Mountain avalanches, and felling of forests,—
Then came the fierce and ravaging tempests!

Terror-stricken, men gathered at the hearth-side,
Listening to the snow-fields, at the floods staring,
Waited and prayed.

Safety was there in no direction,
The boats were away,
Broken the bridges. . . .

Thought they, each time a snow-slide started:
Now is our turn!

At times they saw
Overtake the land-slide's rushing horror
A near-by dwelling:
Saw it balanced high up on the mountain,
Growing apace, looming, and falling;
Like a host from the pit it swept darkly onward,
Shaking the earth,
Trees fled before it like living creatures. . . .
The hurricane tore with the speed of an arrow,
Onward it dashed,
Uprooted and crashed,
Flung out and smashed
Houses in thousands of splinters.

Then the slide, as an army trampling,
'Neath the rocks buried the dead forever.

The flood rose by fathoms, rich was its prey.
Upon its waters, muddy and sullen,
Logs were drifting, and helpless cattle,
Horses struggled amidst the flotsam,
Birds of prey followed;
Now a sharp cry of anguish was heard,
Now a death-groan,
Through the wreck rushing a corpse was seen.

Frightful it was to behold by day,
Worse in the night, when all was but heard.
But when the storm then
Came to break up what the rain had loosened,
Came to cast down what was spared by the land-
slide,
Forests o'erthrowing, the lowlands flushing,
Razing house after house,
"Ragnarök!" shouted men fleeing,
"The day of death and destruction has come."

Up in the mountains a man forced his way
Among the storm-stricken trunks primeval,
Pursuing alone his tempest-bound course.
Slain were all who had shared in his voyage.
When he saw the last of them washed away,
Forspent he stood alone in the storm,
Looked about him, softly musing:

"The sea in its bosom
Refuses to fold me;

Little leaves me
The solid earth."

Food was his of the torrent's bearing,
Fire himself he bore,
Caves roofed him, and there was fire-wood.
Sought he one evening a safer shelter,
Found it too, a cavern protected
By rough-hewn timbers,
Long since built by Finns for their shelter,
Or by hunted outlaw-folk.

From its cavernous depths and passages narrow
To his sense an unbearable stench
Came from all sides. Little he heeded,
Laid him to rest, and was sleeping almost
Ere his head found a pillow.

But in his sleep the pestilent stench
Filled his head with distressful dreams;
Now he thought him in futile conflict,
His foes not men,
But a pack of small gray beasts that grunted.
Now close-wrapped in ice-gray wool
Lay he and suffered, scarce able to breathe.
Cast he the wrappings off, and was lifted
In and out of a sea of fog.
Sinister creatures floated around him,
Changing their shapes as past they drifted,
Hideous forms through the fog-bank peered,
Long and woolly tentacles reached out,

Seeking to grasp him,
Gray were they all, the trolls and the goblins,
Wry of feature.

Then with an outcry
Shrill he awakened,—
But from the gloomy and narrow passages
Back the cry echoed.

He started in terror, then he fell back.
Started again, and loudly shouted,
Hardly knowing what he was doing,—
From the recesses
Heard he the echoing raucous laughter.
Slumber-drunken, he sought to explore,
To learn what were housed here of evil powers.
Light crept in with the dawn of day,
Stronger the stench and the outcry waxed,
And with sight to the shadow accustomed,
Meet now his gaze
—Wherever it strays—
Eyeballs sparkling,
Glowing, yellow,
Like red-hot coals his view confronting.
Slowly before him the mists took shape,
First as wool-gray fog-banks rolling,
Took then as bodies form and color,
Beast on beast,
Great and small,
All the kinds in the forest nursed.

Crept had they hither by ways tempestuous,

'Midst clashing of mountains;
When quaked the earth, their strength was smitten,
All their powers spent in the freshet,
Madly driven by thunder and lightning,
Onward they rushed, or crawled, storm-beaten,
And pell-mell tumbled into the cavern.
There they lay, at each other glowered,
The wolf at the fox, and the bear at both;
United all in their fear of man,
They shook before him who darkened the entrance,
Howled in greeting, and slunk to the rear.

Ho! then laughed he,—a hundred fold
Back from the cavern the laugh was echoed;
All the flood-gates of horror
Flew wide at the howl of the terrified pack:
In fear of each other,
In fear of the echoes' menacing rumble,
Screaming and trembling,
They, who o'er hundreds of lives had been master,
For their own with terror now froze.

"This is mankind!—Where'er I have fared,
They also were gathered together,
Hiding their hatred, and howling in chorus,
Some to the old, and some to the new gods,
Deaf to their pleading.
Had I but all that the world holds of foulness
In one place like this all huddled together!"
Backward he crept, with his eyes fixed on them,
Until he stood in the outermost entrance,

Sprang to his feet and kindled a fire,
Twigs and branches and fire-wood gathered,
Set them aflame!
Apace spread the fire, fanned by the draught,
Flames blazed up, by the wind swept forward,
Curling and licking, the smoke-clouds rolled
In the cavern,
Backwards the beasts slunk, howling and screeching,
In the cavern,
None of them daring to lie near the entrance.
Escape cut off by the wall behind them,
Crawled they over each other's bodies,
Until those lying under
Bit those above them.
Wolves and lynxes, bears and foxes,
Plunged in a welter of blood and smoke,
Struggled and howled,
Until in the throes of death convulsive,
Lay they with teeth in each other fastened.
He who without
Stood, cleansed by the storm, lashed by the tempest,
Lingered long.
When the last yelps of revenge bloodthirsty
To growls were subdued in the blazing pyre,
Turned he about,
Set his gaze on the fog-banks dripping,
Down on the swollen, clay-gray torrent,
Up to the scudding cloud-drift,
Then set he forth,

Heard in the distance the rumbling thunder,
The mountains' reply,
Drew new strength from the clean-washed air.
'T was not for long he fared in peace.
Just as he flung himself down on a boulder,
After long straying o'er crags and foot-hills,
Heard he hollow, moaning sounds
From the earth rising.
The hillocks on hinges seemed hanging, and
 rocking,
The earth-crust heaved, up he was lifted,
High up and higher,—
But by naught that he saw,
But by naught that he heard.
Mysterious thunder afar-off pealed,
Mocking laughter he seemed to hear
From the grassy slopes around:
“Far off in Gyga
 Heard I my pigs a-grunting.
Fie! for a reek of fire in the mountain forests!”
Up was he lifted to the highest tree-top,
Seized fast upon it, and held there hanging;
Up was the tree lifted, even as he,
High up and higher,—
But by naught that he saw,
But by naught that he heard.
 Mysterious thunder afar-off pealed,
Mocking laughter he seemed to hear
From the grassy slopes around.

“The Gyga-Beast,
Grandfather troll,
Wanted to fool thee,
Gave thee my pigs for his sport.
Amid the trees hidden,
Lay he and laughed,
The rascal!”

Again he was lifted—; the hill-tops
Were twisted this way and that,
The skies sank down below,
The river rose flowing above them
Through a green valley.

Mysterious thunder afar-off pealed,
Mocking laughter he seemed to hear
From the grassy slopes around:

“Now I revenge me,
Here I command.
Fit thyself, sea-horse,
To my limping gait!”

Now was he above on the river-bottom,
Now was he beneath 'midst the crags and foot-hills,
Lifted and slung,
Driven and flung,—
But when all was over,
And his sight came back,
He stood on his feet as before.

Then pierced through earth and air
Sharp as a sword,
A word! . . .

Corpse-pale turned the heavens, as quaking upon
them he gazed,
Riven the mountains sank, then fell the raven-
black night;
But an unending host,
Above and below,
Forth from the mountains, up from the hills,
Emerged, streamed onward, marched,
The whole of the groaning earth
Travailed. . . .

Out from the east there gleamed in the darkness
On its need and its terror a beckoning light;
Forward it leaped, mightily waxing,
Building a bridge through the tempest-tossed air,
Over which to his vision marched a procession
Of holy men and white-clad children,
Chanting hymns to bells soft chiming,
Bearing torches, wreaths, and crosses.
Thereafter soldiers, tall and hardened,
Bearing weapons, shields, and banners,
And he saw in the inmost circle
Clearly the *King* on a milk-white charger—
The cross before him, skalds about him,
Endless the following army.
Sun-burnt was he, and seated firmly,
With gleaming eye, and fair hair falling,
And ruddily o'er his breast-plate bearded.
Mighty he sat,

Broad-axe in his right, shield in his left.

Loud sang the skalds:

“Through the fury
Of the western tempest
Seest thou Norway’s
Sun uprising.
Blood-red falling
Its light on the mountain,
As of yore blood-red
Peace fell from heaven.
Lofty the claim
Of the cross, O King,
Be *thou* leader,
Thee we follow!”

Forward the host marched, jubilant, gleaming,

Flanked on either side by the tempest,

Dark walling it round.

But on the singing and milk-white bridge

Hair was not lifted, and lights did not flicker.

Onward it passed, far over the mountains,

Like a star it came, like a star it vanished.

Long he stood there.—Then lay he down

Upon his face, and awe-struck whispered:

“Was it only a dream that passed before me,

Yet was it more than all my waking;

It was life itself. . . .

The life I will henceforth live!

Olaf Haraldsson, King of Norway,

He it was;—him have I chosen!

He has strength that is not his own,
A higher goal than aught I have aimed at.
Him must I cleave to."

NINTH SONG

THE SUMMER MARCH

Now it was Olaf Digre
Came through the forest down toward Tröndelag,
The host its way slowly winding
In the sun.

Onward, down toward the valley
It made—whether o'er marsh or mead—its way.
The King rode all the live-long
Day alone.

Already the season drew
Near to autumn.

None to approach him ventured;—
Though every heart was o'erflowing, they silence kept.
Gently sloping, the homeland
Before them lay.

Birds rose up from the meadows,
The mid-day smoke over the forest swept;
The bishop was bade to sing praises
To the Lord.

Joyous the sight of home
After absence.

Rode then Bishop Sigurd
Forward the King to question; but made halt
While at some distance from him,
And waited.

The King's august countenance
Shone with the light of a distant glory seen,
Nothing his gaze now visioned
On earth.

“Wondrous must be what thou seest,
Lord King!”

Slowly the King then answered:
“First saw I the land, here before me lying,
In the light of the days so joyous
It gave me.
But saw I ever farther.
Trøndelag saw I, blue and yellow it lay;
Yes, saw I the summer over
All Norway,
Fjords with meadows and woods
Among the mountains.

“Pierced then my gaze yet farther
Out o’er the sea to distant foreign shores,
All that in my life’s springtime
I visited.
Raised in my soul the vision,
With laughter and gladness it filled my heart:
The world entire I lastly
Then beheld.
My spirit it seemed to invoke
As in farewell.”

“Lord,” the bishop then answered:
“Rather thou seest how far the light of Christ,
As thou in this land hast borne it,
Shall shine.

The whole world in coming ages
Shall grow through the warm summer-tide in that
light;

The Lord hath vouchsafed thee the vision
For thy strengthening.”

The twain rode farther on
In silence.

Stood there an aged bonder
Before his house on the road of their march,
In the King’s presence bowing:

“Be welcome!

Now is fulfilled my saying:
Within a year’s space shall the King come again;
Ne’er will he leave his faithful

In distress.

Sore was the need of thy ward,
Lord King.”

“Thanks for thy greeting, bonder,
The first I receive on my fatherland’s soil.
Why standest thou alone now
By the way?”

“All the others followed
When thy enemies round the people gathered;—

Farther down the valley

There they are.

Luck to thy meeting with them!

Courage surely will fail the most of them

The King's countenance beholding

The cross guarding.

Heavy am I and old,

But I follow."

Then to the King said some one:

"Their treachery punish, burn their farmsteads;

As soon as they glimpse the fire,

All shame-faced,

Tremble will they for wives and children,

Cowed by uncertainty, maddened by fear,

Soon will their forces scatter,

Flight taking,

Making their army disband

In a moment."

Gentle of mood the King answered:

"The land I redeem, or perish myself;

After me shall it yet blossom

For your sake."

Came then a bonder weeping,

Poor was he, and bewailed his loss:

"Lord, thy men have down-trodden

My corn-field."

The King rode about the field,
To life it started.

Met him another bonder,
“Help me, O King, thee my sons will join;
But they are far too youthful,
I bound them.”

Then said the pious King, smiling:
“Release them, friend, and follow in their steps.
So shall ye all come scatheless
From the conflict.”
Father followed sons—and they
The King followed.

Met him then many bonders,
Stood they together, greeted their liege:
“Lord, what guerdon awaits us,
Who follow?”
“In the sight of the Saviour to fall,
Lose your goods, and all ye hold dear,”
Quietly the King answered;
Rode forward.
The bonders weapons them found,
And followed.

Met them three hundred outlaws,
Gathered together from every neighboring part,
But mostly from Iamtland's forests;
Thus spoke they:

“Great to behold thee, liege-lord,
Marching to battle 'gainst tyranny and hate;
With thy campaign will we
Join forces.”

“None may join me who is
Not a Christian.”—

Forward he rode through the valley,
Low sank the sun, in a blood-red sky,
Hill-tops and grassy meadows
Light-flooding.
Steel-gray and cold flowed the river,
Broad between heather and woodland and marsh,
Flowed till it reached the great farmsteads,
And halted,
Reached at even the shining fjords
In the distance.

The paths which then they were taking
Wound o'er the hill-side, the whole valley revealed,
The skalds sang at the prospect
At eventide.

First came the song of Tormod,
He who was called Kolbrunarskald;
At his voice every man of them heartened
And listened.

The hills and the mighty forests
Gave answer.

“The land we see,” so sang he,
“Heroic deeds and blood now craves.
Sated ’t will be in the conflict
We await.
But as it lies before us,
Joyful for it our lives we risk,
Worthy it is the embracing
Of warriors;
The royal wooer to his bride
We follow.”

Then came the song of young Torfinn,
White was his hair and white his eyebrows,
Tanned were his features, cheerful
His glances.
Worn was his cloak, but his sword-blade
Long and keen with trappings of silver
gleamed,
Bestowed on that joyous spirit
By the King.
Sprang he forth on his horse,
Thus sang he:

“Once more we the land embrace,
Not in farewell, but in victory’s might,—
Embrace will I after the battle
A woman!
Waited has she, the fair one,
Listening eastward, awaiting the war-cry;—

Sees in the air she the ravens,
 There are we!
We all are thinking this night
 Of some woman."

Then Gissur of stature lofty
On a stone sprang from the horse that he rode,
Sang then in tones of silver
 Toward the valley.
The evening sun lighted his helmet,
Over his long pale face fell coal-black hair,
Dark was his eye, half-closed
 It gleamed,
Tremulous sweet and slow
 His utterance.

"Sooner here die in Norway
Than proudly live with Gardarike's maidens;
Sooner be slain with Olaf
 Than flee.
Sooner the cross confessing,
Bent on our knees, than be exalted yonder
With Tore Bjarköi, and sacrifice
 To Odin.
Sooner bear gaping wounds
 Than be faithless."

Up rose then the whole army,
With jubilant shouts and blows on shields ringing.

Gripped by their mood so joyous
Said the King then:
“Skalds, now sing us a war-song,
All of us will echo every word;
Norsemen will sing it in ages
Far distant—
As long as they shall love song
Before battle.”

Then sang Gissur the swarthy,
While forward by the side of the King he rode,
Pledging troth to his liege-lord
In measures lofty.
Each stave the army noted;
High upsoared Gissur's silver-clear tones,
Echoed them all the army,
Like the ocean
Billow on billow rolled over
The meadow.

Then sang Tormod the mighty,
In the van he rode, but backward turned his face,
Drew from his hearers responses
Tempestuous.
The stave they learned; they sang it
Almost before he himself had ended with it,
Jubilant caught and repeated,
And sang it. . . .

The hills and the mighty forests
Gave answer.

Then rose the blithe voice of Torfinn,
Who set himself backward on his horse and
sang.

Sang, as with jest and laughter
They hailed him;
They might not for very laughter
Join in the song, and when anew he sang—
Even less were they able;

They shouted.
The echoes crackled around
In the hill-tops.

So they went toward the valley,
When the dark fell at last on that day of early
fall

Turned they aside, and gathered
On the lowland.

Mass here the whole army
Heard, while they in secret thanked
The Lord, who to their native soil
Restored them.

In their joy some broke from the fields
Spikes of grain.

TENTH SONG

IN THE CAMP

CAMP they have pitched, it is well-nigh dark;
Outstretched lie the men in the field, the wood skirting;
Bonfires of brushwood dot all the ground,
Some of them half-quenched,
Others smoking; sleep overcomes them.

Forth from the forest emerge two men,
Between the groups of men whetting their weapons,
Now over others, asleep 'neath their shields,
Onward they grope
Until before the King's fire they stand.

Fur-clad and tall, like giants they loomed,
Their hair and beard was matted and tangled,
Broad-axes at side, spear-shafts in hand,
No shields they bore,
Over their backs their bows were slung.

Their heads they bared not; stiffly they stood
Before the King's presence, staring at him
In the half-light of the dying fire,
Darkness behind,
Like two wild beasts they emerged from the night.

Sat the King there 'midst a ring of men,
The bishop, Finn Arnesson, and Björn Stallar,

Behind them lay Tormod in Gissur's lap.
Crouching sat Torfinn,
Humming raked up the fire.

At the same moment all saw the men;
Torfinn grinned, and Finn burst out laughing;
Björn became thoughtful, reached for his sword,
The bishop grew pale,
The King alone sat still as before.

Questioning gazed he, but spoke no word.
Clearly his features were seen in the fire-light,
His helmet was doffed, and his brown-yellow hair
Streaming fell down
Over the shoulders wrapped in his cloak.

Felt the men his masterful look
Like a stream of fire through their veins coursing,
Hastened to speak, ere the question came;—
Fear felt they not,
But it seemed as if all he saw.

“Brothers we are from Iamtland come,
Our names are Tore and Afrafaste.
Warriors were we with Arnljot Gelline;
Now we are thine,
We and our band, some thirty men.”

“Where is Arnljot? Comes he not too?”

Questioned the King;—whereat Tore
answered:

“Heart-heavy grew Arnljot, afar he fared.

From him has come

No report. He is lost at sea.”

The King grew silent, forgetful seemed.

Never a word the others uttered.

Only Finn Arnesson gave them a nod;

He liked their looks;—

Once more the King questioned them:

“Me will ye serve;—serve ye also

Jesus Christ, Lord of us all?”

“Nay, no god have we ever served;—

Wasteful it were!

Let each man do what seems to him best.”

“Believe ye in nothing?”—“Ay, in ourselves;

Thus to believe we learned from Arnljot.

Have thy men, who believe in a god,

Day in, day out,

More achieved than one of us?”

“A thousand-fold; highwaymen ye are;

Plainly I see, ye have done but evil.

But if ye desire,—baptism atones:

Cleanse with your blood
All your sins in my sacred cause."

"Ay, we are all of us minded to fight,
Ne'er in an orderly host have we striven.
Honor our quest, and honor, O King,
Is greatest with thee;
But this baptism suits us not."

Answered the King: "If battle is all
Ye wish for, fight in the other army.
Here only those fight who trust in God,
Yield themselves up,
Conquer and fall in Jesus' name."

Finn sprang up, no longer he might
Restrain his impatience; but the King's eyes,
Seeking out his, fixed them and held,
Until at last Finn
Again sat him down at the King's feet.

Björn the dark-haired was sunk in thought,
His great and melancholy eyes were roving
Over the fires half-quenched around.
Just then a song
Slowly from the heath soared up.

The two brothers already away had turned,
Wondering gazed they at one another.

“No,” said Tore, “I will not go,—
Battle I must;
And rather with him who has so few.”

Afrafaste bethought him then:
“Far too dangerous is this baptism;
Do you not think there is witchcraft in it?
This water splashed;—
And the words they mutter then besides?”

Tore answered: “Indeed I think
Baptism bewitches, ’t is plain to see:
All the baptized cleave to the King
Their lives long.
What were the harm, if we did also?”

“This is the second time to-day,”
—The voice of Finn with the King was
pleading—
“Thou hast rejected sinewy men;
Can it be wise?”—
Gently answered him thus the King:

“Reject I them not; again will they come.
But should they all from us keep distant:
Mine, who see I am firm in my faith,
Firm are in theirs:
This ’t is strengthens our little band.

“Ay, for each that I turn away,
Two men grow in each one of ours.”
“Mightest thou *three thousand* turn away,”
Answered Finn,
“For we stand sorely in need of *six*.”

Just then the brothers turned them around:
“Now have we both given thought to the matter,
May we not battle, just as we are,
Battle with thee,
Then thy offered baptism will we accept.

“But thou thyself must go bail for it, chieftain,
We do not know what it may do to us,
Thou who knowest, must take it upon thee.”
“That will I indeed,”
Answered them the King, and smiled.

Cheerfully all of the others laughed,
Alone the bishop rose, and, serious,
Went with the two the way they had come,
The army past,
Deep into the woods where were their men.

Fire after fire now was quenched:
One alone where the forest thickened
Blazed up brightly down by the stream,
The sun uprising
Mingled its rays, the light embraced.

The bishop was there with the fur-clad men;
Quiet they sat or reclined around him,
The story of Jesus fell from his lips,
Childlike and calm,
Deep was the peace, and clear the night.

The meaning perchance was not wholly plain,
But upon their sense, like a dream of childhood,
Vision on vision, slowly it dawned,
As were a door
Opened upon an unknown home.

“Yes,” said Afrafaste at last,
“Perchance I do not aright perceive it,
But if it is true, there lives a man
Who takes upon him
All the evil that I have wrought,—

“Henceforth will I, where’er he be,
Give him my life, unto death be faithful. . . .
If ’t is granted me to begin anew,
From this day on,
Both life and death may be worth the while!”

What time rose on the scene the sun
—The hill-tops burned and the river twinkled—
Fell its light on some thirty men;
Cleansed they came forth
From the chill water to greet the morn.

The bishop, an old man, white and bent,
Chanted a mass by the murmuring river,
Priests were there none, nor choral voices,
Nothing to aid—
Save only his own and sustaining faith.

When all was over, up they arose,
Grasped their weapons, and followed the bishop
Forth through the woods to the camp of the King.
Proud was their gait,
Now should they fight in the royal host.

ELEVENTH SONG
THE KING'S PRAYER

Now is at hand the great hour, the hour long-wished for,
Now shall the hammer
Clash with the cross, the faith with brute force and defiance,
The offering with covetous might.
Rage shall the battle
Perchance for a thousand years or more the land over,
The slain shall rise up again,
Quickly transforming each loss to a tenfold gain.
But the foe likewise —
They too are many —
Shall also be born anew.

Lord, Thou canst see how I seek in Thy footsteps to follow.
Willed have I naught for myself, Thy throne I am building
Up from the stones that fell piece by piece from my own.
Thou seest, Lord,
How poor is the stuff I must use;
Sinful *myself*,
Half-tamed many who follow. . . .
Weak such foundation;
But with our blood
Shall we cement it on the field to-morrow; —
Do not reject it,

New generations
Better shall build it.

Be Thou not angered that many but follow for my sake.
Faith crave the many, but faith have only in what they
can see.

Scan not too closely!

Some strive for riches, others for fame or vengeance,
Many for me, only few understanding wherefore.
But for the few who would do Thy will,
Forgive the others;
Accept our cause, and in failure raise it to victory!

For all of my sins hitherto,
Hot-blooded, hard, lusting for power,
Forsake us not on the morrow,
Overlook them, my God, or hide them, till past is the
hour,
Let me not on the morrow stand in Thy way!

Lord, Thou knowest our folk to its innermost being;
Judge I awrong, when I trust in its noble endowment?
Hitherto has it wasted its strength.
Lord, have mercy! When shall it waken in strength united?
When shall my work have fruition?

Violent hewed I my path; but my thought was:
Sharp must the blows be that fall on the forest primeval,

On trees with their hundreds, rocks with their thousands
of years,
Ere the field may be cleared for the seed,
Seed planted by love.

This is my thought, in sooth, and I rejoice
That the people now gather to battle, come in their fury,
—Come to join issue with Thee!
Battle shalt Thou have; for sparks from the steel bright
flying
Kindle Thy fire, consuming things rotten, and lighting
The world in the coming years.
Drive them to battle, with zeal my heart is flaming,
Cast me upon the pyre, if thereby may the future races
be lit!

Take to Thy clasp
That which perchance I yield up to-morrow;
Grant that my son
Foothold may find where I slipped!

TWELFTH SONG
THE ARMY AWAKENS

“UP, my warriors, to prayer,
The sun is calling,
Greeting the chosen band
Which the Lord this day
Leads forth to battle.
Tormod Kolbrunarskald,
Lift up thy voice,
Build for the people a shining bridge
Stretching from peak to peak,
Build with thy lay
High over us and the vale
Visions in marching array
Of our forefathers forth-faring
To fight.”

Tormod rose to his feet,
Heeding the call,
Drove in a rustling flight
Out over the sleeping host
Bjarkemaal's battle-clad maidens,
The air was filled with their spears,
In the sunshine they glittered and rang,
At the sound of his lay:

“Day is come up again,
Din the cock's feathers;

Time, sons of trouble,
 The toil to be winning.
 Wake aye, and wake aye,
 Heads of the friend-folk!
 All ye of the foremost
 Fellows of Adils.

“High, the hard-gripping
 Hrolf of the shooting,
 Kin-worthy men
 Who will not of fleeing.
 To wine naught I wake you,
 Nor whispers of women;
 But up do I wake you
 To Hilda’s hard play.”

Stave after stave he sang it.
 Soon was there turbulent life
 Throughout the awakened camp;
 Coldly the landscape gleamed,
 Autumn-clear was the air,
 The river flowed on in the sun,
 The woods with color were lit. . . .
 Beat then as one
 Hearts that were longing for home.
 To fight for the land beloved,
 Fight for a king so dear,
 Fight against Odin, his wiles,

E'en as in the songs of old,
To this were they spurred.

The King a ring from his arm
To Tormod then
Gave as a gift with his thanks.
Then swore
Tormod an oath to his liege
That he in life as in death
Would follow
Wherever King Olaf might lead.
Then in banter he said:

“Sighvat, thy skald,
No longer with golden hilt
Shall keep thee apart from me.”
Him the King answered:

“Certainly Sighvat this day
In Jorsal is praying for us.”
Tormod then laughed:

“Scant were the guard of thy banner,
Were we to Jorsal marching
This day.”

Turned then the King aside,
Spoke to his followers:

“Pray must we all this day,
Confessing our sins to God,
Single of purpose,
United with Him in the glorious cause.”—

Mighty he stood on a mound,
Beheld of all.
The bishop arose,
Then before all the host
Fell the King on his knees
And prayed.
Humbly confessed he his sins,
Was heard, and upon him then
Was absolution bestowed.
When he rose up,
The light of redeeming grace
Shone from his visage.
Before his face like the sun
His followers fell on their knees,
Commended their souls unto God,
Prayed and confessed,
In secret vowed to the King
Their faith, and arose,
Joined in the mass, intoned
In the dewy cool of the morn,
Felt themselves cleansed,
As a bird that springs from his bath,
And sings.
Then went they on,
Pushing aside the branches
Wet from the night.
Beasts were flushed,
And birds flew screaming about.
Deep in the woods,

Gleamed through the sparkling leaves
A helmet now,
Now a spear or a shield,
The watchful spies of the foe
Found they concealed.
Then was there war-cry and leaping,
Arrows rang on the tree-trunks,
Branches were broken, and in,
Forcing the densest thickets,
Or over the sodden marsh,
Onward,
Every man they surrounded,
Hewing him down,
Resuming their march in peace.

When they broke forth from the forest,
Wet, but spirited,
Stiklestad lay
Before their view.
Raised on a height in the sunshine,
Mighty and broad,
Was Værdalen's noblest farmstead.
Pearled with dew were the fields.
Tethered horses
Stood on the glistening stubble,
At the side
Were the great houses,
Undivided and stoneless
Stretched the lush meadow.

The forest around
Crept up close,
Protection offering!
But by the height whereupon
Stiklestad lay
Wide-spread the valley bore
On its bosom ripening grain,
Coppice and house.
Off by the dark-blue fjord
The hills gave way,
The woods as well,
The river wound
Its course through the fields and the mead,
Slow-flowing and wide.
Peace reigned supreme.
But from the fjord, in the distance,
Came the enemy.

Dismounted the King.
Round about Stiklestad's height
Should his host
The power of the foe await.
Gathered quickly the chiefs,
Each took his place,
To each came a strengthening word.
Mounted the King then a wall,
Spoke to his army—
For the last time.

On the forest side
Of the mound it stood,
Head close to head;
Marking each word;
So still
Was it, the birds on the boughs
Renewed their song.

“Faithful men,
Here is our goal.
Here will I conquer this day,
Or be borne to rest
On the Saviour’s breast.
What I now say to you, hear:
Be without fear.
The Lord is with us this day,
His way
Surely to triumph shall lead.
If to death on the field ye bleed,
Fear ye then naught,
Rest in the thought,
If ye of strength be bare,
His care
Protects you even in death.
Ye are the seed, here He saith,
The word to have birth
Must be buried in earth.
Blood-watered the root
Alone bears fruit,

Wait for the spring ye may. . . .
Re-born is Norway this day!

“The Lord, whose will be done,
Chooses us, one by one.
Of the death of some He is fain,
Others shall ripen to grain,
Thus will He sow
That once again He may grow
Seed-corn to sow anew
In lands He must yet subdue.
To Him time and place are known,
We only are shown,
That what He sows now in sorrow
Will smile on the morrow.

“Faithful men,
Ye who cast in your lot with me
What time He
Willed that our courage should be tried,
The test now abide!
When from us He took the sword,
We bowed to His word,
All shalt thou for Him forsake,—
And joyous the burden bore,
Until He came
In our banishment’s bitter shame . . .
Called for our help. We await
Here on this field our fate!

Whether for loss of our land we grieve,
Or whether we win it again, we believe:
We are His chosen, our strength renewing,
Still under His banner the goal pursuing.

“I thank ye that joined my command
But lately, that now ye stand
Where our hope is more forlorn!
Oh, on this morn,
Let us the Lord beseech
That in the battle’s breach
The land of our fathers may claim
Men of the loftier aim.
With hopes not all by victory testing,
But resting
Where in vision they see
All the years to be.”

THIRTEENTH SONG

THE COMING OF ARNLJOT

THROUGH the sea of people,
To the King's circle guarded,
Strode a man gold-helmeted,
Clad in cuirass and mail-hose,
Slowly approached the royal presence.

Spear in hand silver-hilted,
Sword for the mightiest only,
Shield hooked upon his shoulder,
Shining his weapons and armor,
Gleaming his eye on the King rested.

Richly the hair round the helmet
Fell all about his shoulders;
Noble and open his visage,
Proud was his chieftain bearing.
Toward him turned the King's guard at
his coming.

All of the host could reckon
None that might reach his shoulder,
Up they looked with wonder,
Shrank aside as he passed them.
Halted he there in the King's presence.

“Greetings, people-leader,
Here at thy feet I bow me,
Give myself wholly to thee.
Be of my gift not scornful,
Late though and single to thee my coming.”

The King smiled, saying:
“Art thou not Arnljot Gelline?
From thee a gift and a message
Got I of them thou didst rescue.
Waited have I long for thy coming.”

Arnljot the King then answered:
“Nowise found I an errand,
Nor to me clear was the pathway,
Till I in a vision beheld thee
Pass me by as a light from eastward.”

The King smiled, saying:
“Comest thou now to baptism,
Of thine own strength grown weary,
Northland’s mightiest warrior,
Fair indeed to me is the omen.”

Arnljot the King then answered:
“Nay, I come to *thee* only.
Thou, King, ownest my service,
Thee alone will I believe in.
Broken is all that to now hath upborne me.”

The King smiled, saying:

“I believe in Jesus Christ!”

Arnljot the King then answered:

“That shall do naught to divide us;

In whom thou believest, believe I also.”

The King smiled, saying:

“Thou that camest to me latest,

Thou shalt stand first on the morrow,

In the van of my royal standard!”

Arnljot arose to his feet then, saying:

“The years that have sped are thirty

Since Vikar, my only brother,

Stood in the van at Svolder,

Olaf thy kinsman defending.

First of his men to fall there, was Vikar.”—

All of the body-guard raised then

Marvelling outcry, recalling

To mind the race and its fortunes;

Perceiving in Vikar's ending

The death foreshadowed that Arnljot craved for.

While now the host of the foeman

Ranged itself in the distance,

Pious the King held discourse

Life and death concerning.

Wondrous things met Arnljot's vision.

There for him were answered
All of the thousand questions;
There his life was transfigured,
Raised to the sunlit uplands,
Dawned then the day of his longings.

And while the host of the foeman
Ranged itself in the distance,
Baptized was Arnljot Gelline,
Served him the King as sponsor,
And all the assembled chieftains.

Fared then Arnljot Gelline
To the van of the royal army,
Where forward yon on the hillside
Torodd bore the King's banner,
Took he his stand before it.

Spear in hand silver-hilted,
Sword for the mightiest only,
Shield hooked upon his shoulder,
Shining his weapons and armor,
Gleaming his eye on the foe rested.

Stood by the banner behind him
Tore and Afrafaste:
On him they gazed in wonder,
They and their men loud hailed him:
"Fight we again beside our chieftain!"

Those who came onward to meet them,
First of all saw Arnljot,
In the midst of his fur-clad following,
Towering o'er them and shining,
Leading to battle the vanguard.

FOURTEENTH SONG

THE BATTLE OF STIKLESTAD

THE King down set him,
His guards around him,
The foe awaiting
In calm.

The King his head rested
Upon Finn Arnesson,
Sank at once into slumber,
And saw
Bright and wonderful visions
Wavering in the heavens,
Saw the Lord's host angelic
In the sun.

Building out of the sunbeams
A bridge, upward arching
Straight from the plain terrestrial
To God.

The King bore they with them,
Light as air uplifted
As on the wings of longing
To the light,
Up the effulgent ladder
Mounted he to heaven,
Through the infinite spaces,
Toward God.

Brighter grew the sunbeams,
Multiplied the angels,

Songs came to his hearing
From God.
Many, many worlds
Onward were pressing,
For a station straining
Near God.
And when they attained it,
Vaster the space was
Than all the thronging worlds
They passed.
Praise-songs were sunbeams,
Sunbeams were praise-songs,
World without end rising
To God.

“King, get thee up!
Near is the foe,
Wood and dale he fills
With a mighty host.”

Finn it was who spoke then,
The King him answered:
“Ah, thou shouldst have waited
Yet a while.
The Lord to my gaze now
His face was revealing.
In that flaming glory
I trembled.”

Finn answered: "Soon thou mayest
Gaze on the Lord,
Get thee up, and thou gazest
On death!"

The foeman's army
Itself bestirred,
Filled all the plain,
Poured from the forest,
Ranged itself.
Down by the hillside,
Not an arrow-shot's
Distance they stood.
Many warriors
The King knew,
And with sorrow
Friends from of old.
The King knew
Kalv Arnesson,
Thus to him spoke:
"Castest thou spear-flight
Upon my army?
Thus was it not
When last we parted
Southward at Möre.
Kin hast thou with me,
And four of thy brothers."
Answered then Kalv:
"What time thou didst leave us,

Got we a greater,
Where we stand
We are fixed.
Me had it vantaged,
Were I with thee.”
Said then Finn,
Fourth of his brothers:
“That was Kalv —
Fairest of speech,
Worst in his thought.”
Torgeir of Kvistad
Made spiteful
Speech to the King:
“Now shalt thou win
The peace we won
Before, when we had thee
For our chieftain.”
The King him answered:
“Indeed I blundered
What time I showed thee
The path of glory,
But of thy course
Here and this day
Be silent:
Within one hour
Diest thou!”
Shone the King’s visage
While thus he was speaking,
Seemed far more imposing

Than before.

His eyes like lightning-flashes
Struck, where he turned them;
Knew him the bonders
And flinched.

“On, on, King’s men,
Cross-men and Christ-men!”
Shouted he, and the army
Rushed forward.
As when the freshet
Bursts in the springtime,
Over the hillside
They surged,
Trumpet-notes, war-cries,
Flashing of weapons,
Banners uplifted—

“On, on!
Press on, King’s men,
Cut down the bonders!”
Heard they, then bore down
The foe,
Pressed them retreating
Until the foremost
Stood where the hindmost
Stood before.
First of all Arnljot,
Iamtland’s chieftain,
Afrafaste, Tore,
Beside him.

ARNLJOT GELLINE

Ne'er was the mightiest
Warrior so joyful as
The fur-clad outlaws
Now were:
Ne'er with maiden dancing
Around the midnight fire,
Ne'er the festal mead-horn
And song
Had been to them like this;
War-cries fired them,
They smote in measure
Therewith.
'T was as if honoring
Those whom they smote,
For in the King's presence
They fought.
No more were remembered
Or mass or baptism,
Themselves they baptized now,
And sang.
Arnljot in the van saw they
As in mist half-shrouded,
Mountain-huge looming
He stood.
His right hand the sword swung,
The spear with his left hand,
Roar and tumult of battle
Around.
Truly this was the first time

In all his life that had found him
In his deeds rejoicing
And laughing.
His way lay clear before him,
As up a sunlit mountain,
All about him glitter
And song.
Felt he as by invisible
Hands were he upborne,
With every blow still higher
He rose,
Until the peak attaining,
Beaming upon him,
Gently smiling saw he
A maid.
Ingigerd was the vision;
'Mid a host of angels,
In fleecy-white cloud garments
She stood,
Smiled on him, down-reaching
Snow-white hands to greet him. . . .
Then almost with longing
He swooned.
But once more collected
Were his thoughts—and nothing
Saw he, save the battle
He fought.
Heard he nothing either,
Save the cries of the conflict,

All the host victorious
Shouted.
For in flight the foemen
Fell back distracted,
Stricken with terror
Each one.
In the arch of heaven
Blood-red the sun shone,
All the earth beneath it
Blood-red.
Forests and meadows,
The sands and the river,
All the men's faces,
Blood-red.
Blood-tinged were the farmsteads,
The corn-fields golden,
The King's white banner,
Blood-red.
From on high an omen
To their seeming,
Wrathful fought against them
Olaf's God.
Fled all the stricken
Out toward the forest,
Sought there to hide them
From God.
Filled with dark terror
Wide they were scattered,
Recognize they could not

Their own,
Paths they hewed fleeing
Among their companions,
Cowards felled brave men
Through fear.

Hard by the wood-side
One man bided,
Tore Hund.
Held he by witchcraft
His men together.
The battle-line saw he
Over the meadow
Writhe like a snake in
The fire,
Drawing together,
Twisting and breaking
In pieces,
Disgorging
Its bowels;
Into the forest
Spilled they,
Fled they all of them
Thither!
Darkened then slowly
The sun in that hour.
Mid-day was almost
As autumn's midnight,
Home went the cattle,

The barn-yard fowl silent
Gat them to roost,
Tempest there was not,
Nor gusts of wind,
Dulled into quiet
Were all,
Only the men went on
Slaying.

Then a madness
Seized on Tore,
The gods were fighting
The battle of men,
The ancient gods
Against the new.
The new times threatened
The olden days,
The sea of hell
Or of Ragnarök
O'erwhelming rose,
Thor and Odin
Or Christus;
Æsir and goddesses
Or angels,
Overthrew, fell
Struggling
In the world-downfall's
Ginnunga-gap.
To his mind

Blindly groping,
Wild confusion
Everywhere.
As his thoughts were,
So his speech was,
Terrified was he
By all about.
The gods themselves,
The gods were the combatants,
Christus and Ymir,
The Lamb and Fenris,
The sun and the dragon,
Loki and Satan,
All in the reek of
The flames of Nastrond.
The raving
Wrought them up to
Berserk fury;
Once more rushed they
Back to the field.
Ended the world now,
They with it,
Then would they slaughter
Ere themselves were slaughtered,
All now should perish,
Even remembrance.

Charged them the King's men,
Few 'gainst the many,

Calm the cross under
They stood.

The sign from on high
Raised up their courage;
Heaven itself descended
To shield!

All toward the King looked,
Massed them together,
For a sign the King lifted
His sword:

“On, on, King’s men,
Cross-men, Christ-men!”
Cut through the darkness
Like fire.

But the pack of Berserkers,
Like wolves in their madness,
Flung themselves all shieldless
Forward,
Fell, while others followed,
Slew, were slain also,
Furious over the corpses
They leaped,
Made themselves a death-track,
More not demanding,
Fell, but ever others
Came on.

The King’s little army
Lessened drew together,
Too great were their losses

To bear.

Arnljot in the forefront

Stout them defended,

Every foeman nearing

He felled;

But too sharply cleft he

The billowing warriors,

And from his own was parted

At last.

Over the heads of the multitude

Alone he towered,

As at the Thing of the Iamtlanders

That night. . . .

But not now demanding

Mulct for his father,

Not now seeking

His bride.

For himself no purpose

In the world remaining,

Only this—to perish

For *him*

Who had reft his spirit

From its empty striving,

Given him a single

Day.

Sword in right hand swinging,

In his left a spear-shaft,

Like a god in the grove

He stood.

Cleared he the ring around him,
Corpses up-piling,
Till with spears they circled
Him round.
And when now all of them
Gathered about him,
When grew too fierce for him
The press,
The threatening spear-points
Upon him closing,—
Beseemed him the circle
Was forced,
Beseemed him that thousands
Gathered to guard him,
Beseemed him a shield-wall
Was lowered,
Beseemed him that shining
And steel-clad a cohort
Swept forward and lifted
Him up.
Fair white spirits
Felt he embracing,
Saving to bear him
Away.
Blissfully singing
On a sun-kissed mountain,
There saw he Ingigerd
Stand.

Fallen was Arnljot,
The mountain eagle,
Shot on the plain.
Warm he bereft was
Of golden feathers,
Trampled and trailed.
Of all of the soaring
Flight of his life
This was the outcome.
Sayeth the saga:
Aimed had he ever
At the highest;
When once he saw it,
He gave himself wholly.

On the battle
Furious raged.
Berserker courage
Broke like a storm
The stout defenders,
Felled was the trunk
That upheld them.
Soon fell Tore,
Afrafaste,
And their men,
All of the valiant
Vanguard.
None had known them
Before this day,

None sought for them
The day after.
Only the corpses
On which they lay
Knew they had been.
Long and lawless
The course of their life;
One faithful hour
Redeemed it.
The font baptismal
The Saviour offered,
With their own warm blood
They filled.
Therein they plunged,
Therefrom they rose,
Mercy beseeching.

The King behind a shield-wall
Hitherto had battled,
Now he bade it open,
Went forth:
“Follow me now, comrades,
The Lord will guard
Of his own the banner
This day!”
When the ring was opened,
Stood he out illumined
’Mid the thick darkness
Around.

When he met the foemen,
Shrank they back in wonder,
Long while no one lifted
A hand.

Torgeir of Kvistad
Struck he down, saying:
“Recallest how I forecast
Thy death?”

Olaf, son of Arngrim,
Struck he down, saying:
“Wrong thy reckoning, Olaf,
This day.”

Tore Hund of Bjarköi
Smote he—but the sword-stroke
Bit not through his troll-fur,
But slipped.

“Thou, Björn, smite the dog down
Who dulls my sword-edge!”
Björn with battle-hammer
Him smote.

Tore Hund then fell not,
Rested a moment,
Then with his long spear
Pierced Björn:

“Thus slay we bears
Up north in Finmark!”
At the King’s feet then
Fell Björn,
Then his great eyes

To the King uplifted,
Melancholy no longer,
But peaceful.
There fell also Gissur,
Skald of the golden eyebrows,
And beside him Torfinn,
He sang:

“Now my best lay to thee,
King, have I given,
Red now it praises
Thy name.”

There was also Tormod
Fatally wounded,
With a spear transfixing
His breast.
Broke he the shaft of it,
Dared not draw forth the point
To his heart piercing;
For *look*:

The King was in danger!
Forward leaped Tormod,
With his sword cleaving
A way.
From the King now parted,
Forced himself Tormod,
Bleeding and trembling,
Forward,
Found the King death-weary
O'er a rock bending,

Saw Tore Hund dealing
Him wounds,
Saw Kalv of Egge
Likewise doing,
Saw the King smiling,
As he fell.
Cried he then to heaven:
“Lord, dost Thou will it?
Well, then will I follow
His steps!”
Then he his sword-hilt
With both his hands grasping
Drove home, and sank weary
To rest.
All the others then with him,
Finn and his brothers,
All the King’s friends sank
To rest.
Hewed they all of them
Still at the foeman,
Hewed, and sank weary
To rest.
Wholly the sun went out,
Night wept from heaven,
In darkness was shrouded
The earth.
Yet was it but little
Later than mid-day.
The warriors now shuddered

Themselves.

They who had triumphed,
Stood now as defeated,
Terrified staring
Into the night.

FIFTEENTH SONG

THE NIGHT AFTER

It was midnight, Tore Hund
Sat on a rock by the King's body;
Even then the limbs he had straightened.
The King's blood
Burned his hand.

The King's blood his wounded hand
Straightway had healed, when he touched it.
Quiet sat Tore, deeply musing;
Groaned at times
With remorse.

Round about the field were lights;
Wives and mothers their own were seeking;
Here were the sobs and groans of the wounded,
Yonder a dog's
Long lament.

Lines of the battle were clearly marked,
In the dark lay heaps of corpses.
The friend was plucked from among the strangers;
Tender hands
Bore him home.

On the farmsteads round about,
Lights were gleaming from barns and houses.

Wherever the wounded had crept for shelter,
Women's hands
Succored them.

Among the men who the corpses scanned
Was Kalv Arnesson; his brothers
Found he alive. But they would not
Aid accept
From his hand.

Kalv came up where Tore sat.
Lingering stood there, nothing saying.
"Here the King lies," whispered Tore;
"The King's blood
Healed my wound."

Held he his hand up in sight of Kalv.
Kalv said naught, away from him turning.
Then saw he Arnljot, stretched out before him,
The King's body
Lay on his.

"Great is the honor thou dost the King
Thus to rest him upon a robber."
Tore uprose then: "Was he a robber?—
Yet in faith
He served the King."

Careful the twain laid hands on the King;
Raised him up, and quiet held him,
While with their feet they Arnljot's body
Kicked aside,
Long and stiff.

But when Arnljot was turned face up,
Saw they his open eyes gaze smiling
Up to heaven; the smile remained him
From that last
Vision he saw.

"The robber laughs," Kalv remarked.
Said Tore, the King on his arm supporting:
"Perchance on the right side he sees himself
now." . . .
Silent departed
Kalv as he came.

NOTES

The extracts given from the Saga of Olaf the Holy in these Notes are from the translation by William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon in Volume Four of "The Saga Library."

PAGE 3. THE SKI-JOURNEY.

The historical basis of this story is provided by Chapter 151 of the Saga of Olaf the Holy, in the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson. Iamtland (Jämtland) is a province of Sweden lying just east of the Norwegian mountain-wall in about the latitude of Thronthjem. The Saga reads: "Ketil Iamti hight a man, the son of Earl Onund of Spareby in Throndheim. He had fled before King Eystein the Evil-minded east over the Keel. He cleared the woods and built there whereas it is now called Iamtland." The Iamtlanders for a time recognized the King of Norway as their liege, and paid him tribute, being themselves of Norwegian descent. But at the date of *The Ski-Journey* (1027?), "they had made up their mind that they would yield obédience to the King of Sweden." King Olaf of Norway, however, still claimed the right to tax the Iamtlanders, and sent twelve messengers to make the collection. When these messengers arrived in Iamtland, a Thing was summoned. The people "were all of one mind on this, that they would not pay scat to the King of Norway. The messengers some would have hanged, and others would have them for blood-offering. But it was settled that they should be held there until the bailiffs of the Swede-king should be coming, and these should determine concerning them what they would, by the counsel of the folk of the country; but that they should make a show of this, that the messengers being well-holden, they were tarried for their abiding the scat, and they should part them and quarter them two and two together." Thorod, their leader, with another of the messengers, was quartered with Thorar, the Law-man, and one evening, when "the ale spake in the Iamts," these captives learned for what purpose they were being held, and soon thereafter made their escape. One night they sought shelter in "a little homestead," were hospitably welcomed, and "laid them down to sleep." The rest of the story, as related in the Saga, is as follows:

"That while the fire was yet aflame. Thorod then saw that from another chamber came forth a man, and never had he seen a man like big. That man had on raiment of gold-broidered scarlet, and was of

the goodliest to behold. Thorod heard that he blamed them for taking guests, when they had scarce meat enough to bless themselves withal. The housewife said: 'Be not wroth, brother, seldom doth such a chance befall: do them rather something that may be to their profit, for thou art handier thereto than we be.'

"Thorod heard that the big man was named Arnljot Gelline, and that the goodwife was his sister. Thorod had heard tell of Arnljot, and of this, moreover, that he was the greatest way-besetter and evildoer.

"So Thorod and his man slept night over, for they were weary afore of their much walking. But when about one-third of the night was still left, thither came Arnljot and bade them stand up and array them for their journey. So Thorod and his man stood up and arrayed them, and breakfast was served them. Then Thorir [their host] gave snow-shoes to either of them, and Arnljot betook himself to faring with them, and strode on the snow-shoes, which were both broad and long. But so soon as Arnljot plied his staff, he was off and afar from them. Then abided he, and said that in this wise they would get no-whither, and bade them step on the snow-shoes along with him; and so did they; and Thorod stood next to Arnljot and held by his belt, while Thorod's fellow held on to him. Then Arnljot slid on as fast as if he were faring loose.

"Now when one-third of the night was spent, they came to a certain hostel, and made fire there, and dight their meat. But whenas they were at meat then spake Arnljot, and bade them cast down nought of the meat, neither bone nor crumb. Arnljot took out of his sark a silver dish, and ate therefrom. But when they were full, Arnljot gathered their leavings together, and thereupon they got ready for their beds.

"At one end of the house there was a loft on the tie-beams, and up into that loft went Arnljot and the others, and there they laid them down to sleep. Arnljot had a mickle bill, the socket thereof was gold-driven, but its shaft was so high that one's hand could but just reach to the socket, and he was girt with a sword withal. They had both weapons and raiment up there in the loft with them.

"Arnljot bade them hold their peace. He lay the foremost of them in the loft.

"A little while afterwards there came twelve men to the house; they were chapmen, who were faring to Iamtland with their wares. When they came into the house they made mickle din about there, and were very merry, and they made them big fires. But when they had their meat they cast out all the bones. Thereafter they got them ready for bed, and lay down on a settle before the fire there. But when they had

sat there for a little while there came into the house a mickle troll-wife; and whenas she came in, she swept up fast, and took the bones and all things she deemed good to eat and cast them into her mouth. Then she seized the man that lay next to her, and tore and slit him all asunder, and cast him into the fire. Then awoke the others to an evil dream forsooth, and leapt up. But she sent them to hell one after other, till only one was left alive; and he rushed up the floor under the loft, calling out for help if any were thereto in the loft who might be of avail to him. Arnljot stretched out his hand for him, and caught him by the shoulder and drew him up into the loft. Then she ran up to the fire and fell to eating of the men, those who were roasted. Then stood Arnljot up and gripped his bill, and thrust it between her shoulders so that the point ran out through the chest. She turned her hard thereat and cried out evilly and ran out. Arnljot lost the hold of the spear and she had it away with her. Then Arnljot bestirred himself and cleared out the bodies of the men, and set a door and door-posts before the hall, for she had broken it all loose when she went out.

“And now they slept for what was left of the night. But when day dawned, they stood up and first ate their day-meal; and when they had eaten, Arnljot said: ‘Now shall we part here: ye shall follow this sledge-road whereby the merchants fared hither yesterday; but I will seek my spear. For my wages I shall take what I deem of money’s worth among the chattels which these men owned. But thou, Thorod, shalt bear my greeting to King Olaf, and tell him this, that he is the man of all men I were fainest to meet, but he will deem my greeting nothing worth.’

“Therewith he took up the silver dish and rubbed it with a cloth and said: ‘Bring this dish to the king and say that it is my greeting.’ Thereafter either of them got ready for the journey and parted, even as things were. And Thorod and his fellow, and the man withal out of the company of the merchants who had escaped alive, went each his own way, and Thorod went on until he met King Olaf in Chippingham [Nidaros = Throndhjem], when he told him all about his journeys and brought him the greeting of Arnljot, and handed over to him the silver dish. The king says that it was ill that Arnljot should not have come to see him, ‘and it is a great scathe that so good a fellow and a man so noteworthy should have fallen into such evil ways.’” (Chapter 151.)

This episode marks Arnljot’s first appearance in the Saga of Olaf the Holy. He does not appear again until he comes to offer himself to the King on the field of Stiklestad, as described in the Thirteenth Song

of Björnson's epic. The poet, meanwhile, gives free flight to his imagination, building upon the basis of these scanty materials the marvellous character-study which enthalls us in our reading of the poem. It will be noticed that in one respect *The Ski-Journey* departs from the saga-narrative. The Iamtlanders who intrude upon the hut in which Arnljot has sought shelter for the night are represented as being the pursuers on his track with their blood-hounds, instead of being the travelling chapmen of the saga.

PAGE 7. AT THE WINTER-THING.

This Song was written in Kristiania in the winter of 1859-60, a winter of unusually heavy snows, and published in a Danish magazine with the understanding that it was a fragment of a greater work soon to appear. "It portrays the unrest and ferment that stir in the minds of the Iamtlanders. This remote forest settlement was still heathen, but the faith in the old gods is being undermined, and reports of King Olaf's introduction of Christianity into Norway have made a deep impression upon receptive and thoughtful natures. It is as if the stormy winter were shaping men's minds to seriousness of thought. The gloomy clouds of winter that come driving from Norway and settling heavily over the Iamtland forest 'whisper of eternal things.' Thoughts turn to the great Fimbulwinter, which, according to the old faith, should be the precursor of the world's destruction. Minds grow tense with anticipative terror. Even Trand, the priest, is disturbed by the new ideas and doubts awakened by the reports of King Olaf's crusade in Norway. He knows that the old gods must sometime be overthrown, that Loki sometime just before Ragnarök shall be loosed from the bonds that the gods have laid upon him, and with all the giant-hosts of evil shall meet the gods in a decisive battle. But he knows also that after the downfall of the gods, 'the Mighty' shall come from on high and create a new order. May Olaf's god be 'the Mighty'? At times, he seeks to persuade himself that the whole matter is a tissue of lies and witchcraft, contrived by the giants, the enemies of the gods. But at others, it seems to him the beginning of the end, and that Loki has freed himself. He becomes so possessed by these thoughts that in his dreams he sees Olaf (Olaf the Big, as they called him in Sweden) seated in the place of Olaf's image." (J. Mörländ.)

PAGE 9. *Olaf Digre.*

Olaf the Big.

PAGE 9. *How worms crawled out of the rotten wood.*

After a battle in Gudbrandsdale, a Thing was summoned, in which Olaf discussed with the defeated chieftain the merits of the old and new religions. On the third day of this meeting, the peasants brought with them a great wooden image of their god, "a mickle man-shape all gleaming with gold and silver." Olaf's colloquy with the chieftain is thus related in the Saga:

"Then Gudbrand-a-Dales stood up and spake: 'Where is now thy God, king? I am minded to think now that somewhat low he beareth his chin-beard; and it seemeth to me that less now is the swagger of thee and of the horned one yonder whom thou callest a bishop, and that sittest there beside thee, than yesterday it was; for that now our god is come, he who ruleth all things, and looketh on you with keen eyes, and I see, that now ye are full of fear, and scarce dare to lift up your eyes. Now, drop your folly, and trow in our god, who hath all your ways in his hand.' And thus he closed his speech.

"The king spake to Kolbein the Strong, without the bonders wotting thereof: 'If so it befall, the while of my speech, that they look away from their god, then give him that stroke, the most that thou mayest, with thy club.'

"Then the king stood up and said: 'Many things hast thou said to us this morning; thou deemest it a wonder that thou mayest not see our god, but we hope he will soon come to us. Thou threatenest us with thy god, who is blind and deaf, and may neither help himself or others, and may get him nowhither away from his place, save he be borne; and now I look for it that he will be but a little way from ill. Lo! look ye now and gaze eastward, there now fareth our god with a great light.'

"Then ran up the sun and all the bonders looked towards him. And in that same nick of time laid on Kolbein so well on their god, that it burst all asunder, and out of it leapt mice as big as cats, and adders, and worms. But the bonders were so afeard, that they fled away, some to their ships, but whenas they ran out their craft, the water rushed in and filled them, so they might not go a-board them. But they that ran to the yoke-beasts found them nowhere." (Chapter 119.)

PAGE 9. *Loki.*

"One dweller in Asgard is still to be mentioned, and that is the evil Loki, who disturbs the peace of the gods, and will work their final ruin. He was born among the Yotuns, but gained the confidence of Odin by

his agreeable presence and his fair speech. He had three children — the wolf Fenris, the world-serpent, and Hel." (H. H. Boyesen.)

PAGE 10. *Lawman Tore.*

The Lawman (*Lagmand*) was the spokesman of the Thing, who knew the law by heart, and declared it when disputes arose. When Tore is later represented as "grasping the ancient law-book," the poet employs an anachronism, since the law at that time remained unwritten.

PAGE 10. *Truce was proclaimed.*

No outlaw might be present at the Thing. Should one present himself, he might be slain without compunction.

PAGE 11. *Gauta-Tore.*

The Tore who comes with Afrafaste to join the King in the Tenth Song.

PAGE 11. *Varg i veum.*

Wolf in the sanctuary. It will be remembered that in the *Frithiof Saga*, the hero, in his bitterness, declares that men call him *varg i veum*.

PAGE 11. *Hel.*

Daughter of Loki, and goddess of the underworld.

PAGE 12. *A god in the grove.*

The images of the gods were usually erected in groves; hence this expression, which occurs elsewhere in the poem.

PAGE 15. *Unloaded his ships.*

This would seem to indicate that he had come by way of the Gulf of Bothnia, and that Iamtland reached to the coast.

PAGE 15. *Vikar of Tiundaland.*

Arnljot's brother is mentioned in Chapter 102 of the Saga of Olaf Trygvason in the *Heimskringla* (and also twice in the Great O. T. Saga), where we read of the manning of the Long Serpent, Olaf's famous warship. "Wulf the Red was the man hight who bore King Olaf's banner and was in the prow of the Worm; and next to him was Kolbjörn the Marshal, Thorstein Oxfoot also, and Vikar of Tenthland, the brother of Arnljot Gelline."

PAGE 17. *Svolder.*

A small island in the Baltic, between Rügen and the mainland. There

was fought, on September 9, 1000, the great sea-fight between Olaf Trygvason and his allied foes, King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark, King Olaf of Sweden, and Earl Erik of Norway, which resulted in the defeat and death of Olaf Trygvason, and the capture and destruction of the Long Serpent, the most famous of Norse galleys.

PAGE 35. ARNLJOT'S YEARNING FOR THE SEA.

This Song, as well as *At the Winter-Thing*, was written in 1860, and appeared at that time in a Danish magazine. The year (1870) that witnessed the publication of the completed *Arnljot Gelline* was also the year in which Björnson's collected *Poems and Songs* appeared, and it is to be noted that *Arnljot's Yearning for the Sea* was included in that collection as an independent poem, entitled *The Sea*. This poem is in many respects a piece of psychological self-portraiture. In the late fifties, Björnson had been a storm-centre of political controversy, and at times must have felt with Arnljot, that every man's hand was against him. The years during which *Arnljot Gelline* was written were the years in which the thought of the modern world was fecundating Björnson's mind, and broadening his outlook. He was coming, like his hero, to feel that the old beliefs were outworn, and to get glimpses of the new world of ideas that was to transform the manner of his thinking, and open broad new horizons to his view. This transition period of unrest and intellectual ferment is not so much revealed as foreshadowed in Arnljot's musings upon the sea, which to him, as to every Norseman, had such appealing and dreadful significance.

"For the old Norsemen the sea stood as the goal of all desire when their minds were stirred by ambition and the lust for adventure. There was something very alluring in the free and joyous life of the viking ship. There were new things to see, and booty to gain. To foreign lands overseas fared the discontented who had been balked or had suffered misfortune at home. This longing was in the very blood of youth. At sea indeed dangers threatened from every side, and foes lurked in every fjord, or behind every island. But this danger-filled warrior-life, in which heroic deed and noble death went hand in hand, was the ideal of the old Æsir-religion. He who fell in battle entered straightway into the warrior-life of the chosen with Odin in Valhalla." (J. Mörländ.)

PAGE 38. IN THE MIST OF THE NORTHERN OCEAN.

There are two Sagas of Olaf Trygvason. One is the work of Snorri, in the *Heimskringla*; the other, very much longer, is a compilation made about the middle of the thirteenth century from many earlier narra-

tives. For much of the matter in the Sixth Song of *Arnljot Gelline* Björnson has drawn upon this Great O. T. Saga, and the passages reproduced in these Notes are taken from J. Sephton's English translation. *In the Mist of the Northern Ocean* brings Arnljot to our view upon his return to the icy seas of the Northland after a viking expedition which had taken him to the coasts of Wales and Ireland. In their furtherance of the Christian faith, both Olaf Trygvason and Olaf the Holy were constantly beset and harassed by trolls—evil spirits—who realized that the foundations of their power were being undermined, and drastic indeed were the courses of the Christianizing kings in dealing with these sinister antagonists. One episode of this sort is picturesquely related by Longfellow in *The Saga of King Olaf*. Arnljot, whose inclination toward the new faith was surmised by the trolls, would naturally be singled out for attack by these evil powers, and Björnson has transferred to him the incident given in Chapter 212 of the Great O. T. Saga.

“After King Olaf had Christianized all the region round about the frith [of Salpti], he proceeded south, sailing close to land. Many events happened on this voyage that have a place in stories; we are told that trolls and other evil spirits scoffed at the King's men, yea, sometimes at the King himself. One day as they were on their voyage, they beheld a man in a sculler rowing landwards and making towards some rocks. As he sat in the boat he looked tall and broad-shouldered, and plied his oars vigorously. The King said to his men: ‘Put some spirit into your rowing; I want to come up with the tall man there in front, and see what sort of a youth he is.’ The tall man, seeing them quicken their stroke, did likewise. He pulled his oars sharply through the water, kept his shoulders down, and maintained his distance ahead. The King then urged his men to row still harder; ordering the oars to be brought into play until every bench on the *Serpent* was occupied. ‘Let two or three men,’ he said, ‘sit at every oar, and even so we shall need all your strength to overtake that fellow.’ They did, therefore, as the King bade them, and the *Serpent* began to gain on the boat. And now the boatman, observing the approach of his pursuers, was seen by the King to glance sharply around in all directions, and to look hard at the rocks as if measuring his distance from them. Putting forth his strength, he strove eagerly to keep in front; raising himself up as he pulled in his oars, and then sinking down into the hollow of the boat as he stretched forward. Nevertheless his distance ahead grew smaller, though very slowly. When the King thought the man was within hearing distance, he hailed him:

'Stop there, you tall fellow ; don't row away ; we wish to speak with you.' 'Your treatment of all our friends,' answered the boatman, 'has never been such as to make me wish to speak with you ; and I shall not wait for you. If we meet, the truth of the proverb will be seen: "One man is no match for many."' Then quoth he:

*'Far, far away is my bold grey-haired brother, mighty
in thought and deed.*

The dusky ship bears down upon my boat.

*If we two sons of Hardrad, grey-haired men, were here
together, we should not flee.*

O'er the foaming surf the Serpent glides.'

'You would flee all the same,' said the King, 'though there were two of you. Who are you ?' 'That is no business of yours,' answered the man, and thus spoke:

'On the sides of thy ship, the reindeer of the wind,

Play sixty oars, for thee alone.

A mightier prince on earth is scarcely seen.

*On my boat's side there play in my grasp but one or two,
to sweep the billows.*

Thus overpowered, I must yield.'

'And yield you must now,' said the King. 'Though I yield,' answered the man, 'I am not to blame. Such a lot must needs befall an old fellow in face of so many young and gallant men ; but for all that I shall never come into your power.' Saying these words, he sprang up with a sudden start, flung away his oars, and upset the boat under him. In this way they separated, and the man was never seen again."

The episode of Thor's appearance on Arnljot's ship is based upon the following passage in the Great O. T. Saga, Chapter 213:

"One day as King Olaf was sailing south along the coast, under a fair, light wind, there was a man standing on a rock who shouted to them and begged the favour of a passage towards the south of the country. King Olaf therefore steered the *Serpent* to the rock where the man stood, and he climbed on board. He was a young-looking man of tall stature, handsome, and he had a red beard. As soon as he came on board the dragon-ship, he began jesting and wrestling with the King's men, who found his play rough whenever they tried their strength against him. He afforded much merriment, and the men amused themselves in bantering him and laughing at him. He in return made fun of the King's men, and laughed at them as being poor and weakly

creatures. 'You are not worthy,' he said, 'to serve so renowned a King and so fair a ship. This dragon-ship was valiantly manned when Raud the Strong owned it. He scarcely required the aid of such men as I am for the sake of their strength, but only for amusement and counsel, and in comparison with me you are but a feeble set.' The King's men asked if he had any stories to tell them, old or new; and he replied that there were few questions, in his opinion, which they could ask and he not answer. They took him, therefore, to the King, saying that he was a man of much knowledge. The King said to him: 'Tell us, if you can, some tales of olden time.' 'I will begin then, Sire,' answered he, 'with this land near which we are sailing. It was inhabited of yore by giants, who all chanced to come to a sudden end at one and the same time, except two, both women. Afterwards, when people came from the east to colonise the country, the two giant women lorded over them, and troubled them. The evil lasted until the inhabitants resolved to call upon Redbeard for aid. So I grasped my Hammer, and slew both the giants. And the people have continued to call upon me for aid in time of need from that day, O King, until now that you have so greatly wasted all my friends in a way that merits vengeance.' Having thus spoken, he looked over his shoulder at the King, and at the same instant, with a scornful grin, plunged overboard, swift as a bolt, into the deep, and was never seen again."

PAGE 39. *Bretland.*

Wales.

PAGE 43. *Day after day to fight for the sake of fighting.*

"Valhalla is splendidly decorated with burnished weapons. The ceiling is made of spears, the roof is covered with shining shields, and the walls are adorned with armor and coats of mail. Hence the champions issue forth every day and fight great battles, killing and maiming each other. But every night they wake up whole and unscathed, and return to Odin's hall, where they spend the night in merry carousing." (H. H. Boyesen.)

PAGE 44. *Two scurrying giant maidens.*

See the second quotation from the Great O. T. Saga, above.

PAGE 49. *THE SPRING FRESHETS.*

This rugged Song is evidently allegorical in character. Literally, it offers a picture of the powers of nature at their work of destruction. Symbolically, it pictures the breakdown of the ideals that have shaped

Arnljot's life hitherto. The following interpretation of the allegory is given in the commentary by J. Mörlund:

"Arnljot has grown so weary of his hopeless thought and rending doubt, that he is tempted to seek refuge in the most unworthy form of faith, in the horrible, the hiding-place of cowardice, to which one is hounded by fear, rather than drawn by religious longings. Many take refuge in this form of belief without having cast aside their wild-beast nature, or having seriously tested the efficacy of cleansing doubt. In the meanwhile, Arnljot awakens, and perceives by the stench that he has fallen into bad company. These wild beasts are like mankind in the mass representing especially its sectarian differences. They yelp at the free-thinker, and greet him with guffaws of horse-laughter, thinking they are crushing him. . . . This pitiable cowardice in individuals who might be mutually helpful is so hateful and bloodthirsty, that it arouses Arnljot first to laughter, and then to anger. He wishes that he might have all the foul creatures of the world thus huddled together, as he heaps up fagots in the cave-entrance, and sets fire to them. Then follows a powerful description of the death-struggle of these cowardly but bloodthirsty man-beasts, and we seem to hear an echo from the wars of religion when we read how,

*In throes of death convulsive
Lay they with teeth in each other fastened.*

This destruction, which in the case of such a wretched pack seems quite justifiable, has a liberating effect upon Arnljot. He looks calmly forth upon the upheaval of nature that has so terrified them, and feels himself 'cleansed by the storm.'

"But this feeling of calm satisfaction with a deed of violence done to these cowardly and miserable fellow-creatures of his is not for long a source of enjoyment. Although his action was impelled by righteous anger, it was still the expression of something hard, wild, and cruel in his nature. If his thought seemed to be set free, in his heart was the old ice-bound hardness. His feelings were those of his vengeful frenzy in Iamtland. His ruling passions still hold him in their grasp. The symbolical presentation of this is found in the way in which various earth-trolls sport with him at their will. He hears hollow moans, and the earth heaves beneath him. The beasts, so despicable in his eyes, that he has burned up in the cavern, have also their friends. There is some one who thinks of them and cares for them also. This finds expression in the anxious words echoed above him.

*'Far off in Gyga
Heard I my pigs a-grunting.
Fie! for a reek of fire in the mountain forests!'*

Loud laughter rings around him, and it is indeed matter for laughter that he, the human reptile, who has in himself so much of the wild-beast nature, should assume the right to judge.

"But may not a man's righteous anger wreak itself upon what is mean and contemptible? Only when it is in the service of a higher power. A selfish action, although good in and of itself, is prompted by the evil one. All personal feelings of anger and vengefulness are promptings of the evil one, who is amused by them. The Gyga-Beast, the master-troll, is amused when Arnljot deals out justice according to his own ideas.

*'The Gyga-Beast,
Grandfather troll,
Wanted to fool thee,
Gave thee my pigs for his sport.
Amid the trees hidden,
Lay he and laughed,
The rascal!'*

Arnljot is vengeful. He felt himself in the right when he slew the Iamtlenders to avenge his father. Now he has laid violent hands upon certain of his fellow-creatures, repugnant indeed, but destroyed by him merely because they aroused his scornful anger. Now will fall upon him the same law of vengeance that he himself has followed.

*'Now I revenge me,
Here I command.
Fit thyself, sea-horse,
To my limping gait!'*

"The conflict which takes place in Arnljot's mind and conscience, is portrayed in this Song as a conflict in nature. When he is flung about by invisible powers, and when the earth heaves under him, we have a symbolical portrayal of the way in which he is flung about by his changing moods, finding no reasonable outlook for a foothold. When laughter greets him from the earth beneath, and voices from the air around, it is his own conscience that speaks, and when he has dealt so hardly with the worthless in others—symbolized by the wild beasts—it is in reality himself whom he has scourged. Deep within himself lie the same faults that he has condemned so severely, and the Gyga-Beast,

grandfather troll, who rules over all these wild beasts and evil passions, is thus symbolically seen as his own sinful nature—the old Adam—here fittingly indicated by the epithet ‘rascal.’

“Arnljot is now—it may be said—self-convicted of sin. He sees that human justice is greatly crippled, and that the human decisions resulting therefrom cannot stand in a higher court. He realizes now that the best man can do is so bad that it provides no foundation upon which to build his life, but also that the worst he does is in so far justified that its judgment or punishment is not to be assumed by human faculty. His gaze seeks a higher justice tempered by love. He has—like the poet [Ibsen]—‘sat in judgment upon himself.’ His pride is bent, his self-sufficiency is shattered, his cold defiance ends only in despair. But he does not wholly collapse. The earth heaves, the hills rock beneath him, he is tossed up and down between valley and tree-tops, but in the end he keeps his footing.

“And then—in his uttermost need—a divine word rings through the air, revealing to his sight a two-fold vision, lighting up the darkness of human volition. He sees a wild, disorderly troll-horde pour forth from mountains and hills. They are the human passions: untamed strength, love, vengefulness, hatred, pride, defiance. As long as these human passions are unrestrained, and not bound to the service of a noble aim under the banner of a lofty thought, they are dangerous and devastating; they are trolls.

“But at the same time he sees upon the other side a shining host, its driving power these and other passions, restrained and ennobled. He sees a procession of priests and children, with torches, and crosses, and garlands, followed by warriors with banners and weapons, and in the midst he sees the King, Olaf the Holy; bells are ringing, and songs rising to heaven. All their passions are ordered under the cross. They have renounced every selfish desire. In quiet strength is their resistless force; love has been transformed to self-sacrificing affection, hatred and vengefulness have become burning zeal, pride and defiance have become unfaltering courage and unbending faith. His gaze now beholds all that he has been groping after. His own heavy passions, which he has nursed, and under which he has suffered, he now understands aright. They are like the trolls who, in wild disarray, vainly break from the hills. But they may be transformed into noble warriors, priests, and skalds, in the shining march toward the future. They first have their true value, when they take place and rank under the banner of a higher vision of life.

"When Arnljot sees that here is the goal of his longings, the higher mission to which he can consecrate his strength, his choice is to go with Olaf's army. There he will find much of what allured him in the old warrior-life of the heathen. He sees tall, hardened warriors with weapons and shields, the king himself in mailed armor, his beard streaming—red as Thor's—over his breast. The skalds sing of battle—at whose cost only may peace be won—now as before.

*'As of yore blood-red
Peace fell from heaven,
Lofty the claim
Of the cross, O King,
Be thou leader,
Thee we follow.'*

It was this common element in the old heathen war-ideal and the higher life-aim of Christianity that impelled so many brave men to take part in the crusades. The assurance that they were fighting in a sacred cause brought peace to their conscience.

"When the poet in this Song pictures Arnljot's spiritual transition from selfish pride to the yielding of self, he gives us at the same time an image of the transition from heathendom to Christianity. The passage from winter to summer is a good metaphor for the passage from Æsir faith to Christianity, from the hard to the gentle, from the cold to the warm.

"Into this description Björnson has doubtless poured much of his own mood and life-experience. He has—like Arnljot—felt the danger of leaving a too free rein to the passions—ambition, vengefulness, pride, the self-regarding impulses—felt the need of men to join themselves in pursuit of a common aim, either merely human, or religious. He had, during years in which Arnljot's figure was taking shape in his mind, become a warm adherent of Grundtvig's conception of Christianity, and of his view of human life. Grundtvigianism was assuredly at that time for Björnson what the shining army of Olaf on the milk-white bridge was for Arnljot, when it was revealed to his gaze in the midst of the wild tempest of his passions.

"The Grundtvigian view of Christianity and history stamps the entire work. For Grundtvig, God is the people's great leader throughout the course of history, with whom men ally themselves of their own free will, as the warriors of old took service with a king, as free men giving him their full devotion. In this spirit of free devotion, men bring

with them their full human equipment, but all human effort becomes ennobled by the divine relation. Thus Arnljot's battle under the banner of the cross is nobler and loftier than were his feuds in Iamtland, although he strikes men to earth in both cases. For Christianity is no religion of peace in the sense that strife is excluded, when causes worth fighting for are at stake."

PAGE 50. *Ragnarök*.

The twilight of the gods. The day of destruction and doom.

PAGE 60. THE SUMMER MARCH.

With this Song begins the second section of the poem, in which Olaf the Holy takes the place of Arnljot as the central and commanding figure. It is not difficult for us to transfer our interest from one to the other, since the two characters have much in common, both in their external history and in their spiritual experience. J. Mörlund says: "Just as Arnljot boldly wreaked vengeance upon his father's slayers, so Olaf began his adventurous career by avenging the murder of his father Harald Grenske in Sweden, and his deeds in England and France exhibit a reckless temerity, defiant of every peril. Just as Arnljot loses Ingigerd, who loves him, so also had Olaf lost *his* Ingigerd, the Swedish princess, whom he loved and who returned his affection. History bears witness to the fact that this loss filled his mind with sorrow, and it is significant that he fled to the Russian court, where Ingigerd was queen, when misfortune overtook him, and he was forced to leave his fatherland. Olaf was indeed at all times a zealous Christian, who attended mass and built churches, but it was first during his exile in Russia that Christianity so took possession of him that it bent his originally vengeful mind, and converted him into the gentle martyr, willing to sacrifice all, and utterly devoted to his divine mission."

The historical situation at the time of *The Summer March* may be briefly summarized. King Knut of England and Denmark claimed the overlordship of Norway, and it was his ambition to unite England with the three Scandinavian countries in a single powerful monarchy, which should counterbalance the powers of central and southern Europe. In 1028, he headed a strong expedition which landed at Nidaros (Thronthjem), where he was proclaimed king of Norway. Having appointed his nephew Earl Haakon Eriksson as regent, he returned to England. To maintain his hold upon Norway, Knut had to command the support of the great Norse chieftains, and this he obtained by a system of flattery and bribery which detached many of the already dis-

affected leaders from Olaf's cause. Boyesen says : "The separatist tendencies of the old tribal magnates had triumphed over the national idea represented by King Olaf. It was they and not King Knut who, in order to gratify their own greed for power, had destroyed the national unity." Chief among these leaders were Einar Tambaraskjælver (at that time abroad); the two Halagoland chieftains, Haarek fra Tjotta and Tore Hund paa Bjarköy; and Kalv Arnesson, Haarek's brother-in-law. Under these circumstances, the only course open to King Olaf was to flee from the country. He crossed the mountains into Sweden, whence he made his way to Russia (Gardarike), where he was welcomed by King Jarislaf, who was wedded to the Ingigerd whom Olaf had wooed in his earlier years. This was in 1029, and for a year following Olaf remained in Gardarike, plunged in deep melancholy at the thought of his lost kingdom, and almost resolved to renounce his ambition, make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and become a monk. But late that year, Björn Stallare, a chieftain who had gone over to Knut for a time, but who now wished to return to his old allegiance, sought Olaf out at the court of Jarislaf, bringing the news that the regent, Earl Haakon, had been lost at sea, and urging Olaf to make the attempt to re-conquer his kingdom. "He letted not his journey till he came east into Garth-realm to King Olaf in winter, about Yuletide. The king was right glad when Björn met him, and asked for many tidings from the north from Norway. Björn said the earl was lost, and the land left without a ruler. At these tidings the men were right glad who had followed King Olaf out of Norway, and had had there lands and home. Many other tidings from Norway Björn told to the king, such as he was greatly wistful to know. Then the king asked after his friends as to how they kept faith with him, and Björn said that was all with ups and downs; and therewith Björn stood up and fell at the feet of the king, and took his foot about, and said : 'All in God's power and thine, O king ! I have taken money from the men of Knut, and sworn fealty to them; but now will I follow thee, and never sunder from thee while we are both alive.'

"The king answers: 'Stand up speedily, Björn; thou shalt be in peace with me. Boot this to God. I may wot that few men will be now in Norway who will keep their faith with me, when such as thou turn off. And true it is, that men sit there in great trouble, because I am far off, and they sit before the unpeace of my foes.'

"Björn told the king who mostly took the lead in raising up hatred against the king and his men. Thereto he named the sons of Erling of

Jadar, and other kinsmen of theirs, Einar Thambarskelfir, Kalf Arnison, Thorir Hound, and Harek of Thiotta." (Chapter 197.)

The King was greatly stirred by this news, but did not come to a decision until one night when Olaf Trygvason appeared to him in a dream, reproaching him for his faint-heartedness, and exhorting him to risk all upon the great adventure. "And when the king awoke, he thought he saw the countenance of the man as he went away. So thenceforth he hardened his heart and made strong that mind alone of faring back to Norway, even as he had been eagerest for all along; and he found that all his men would the rather that he should do so. So he talked it into his mind that the land would be easily won, since it lay lordless, even as he had heard. And he was minded to think that if he came thereto himself, many would be minded to give him help. And when the king made clear this rede to his men, they all took it right thankfully." (Chapter 199.)

PAGE 60. *Tröndelag.*

Throndhjem.

PAGE 60. *Rode then Bishop Sigurd.*

"Then rode the bishop up to him and spoke to him, and asked whereof he was thinking, seeing he was so hushed. For the king was ever glad and of much speech with his men in the journey, and thus gladdened all who were anigh him. Then answered the king with mickle care: 'Wondrous things have been borne before me a while. I saw now over Norway when I looked west over the bent of the mountain; and I called to mind how that I had many a day been glad in that land. Then I had a sight so that I saw over all Thrandheim, and then over all Norway; and the longer that sight was before my eye, then saw I ever the wider, right until I saw over all the world, both land and sea. I knew clearly those steads where I had been before and had seen; but even as clearly saw I steads I had never seen before, some whereof I have heard tell of, both dwelt and undwelt, as wide as is the world.' The bishop said that this was a vision of holy fashion and of right great mark." (Chapter 213.)

PAGE 63. *Their treachery punish, burn their farmsteads.*

"Finn Arnison answered the king's speech and said: 'I will tell thee,' says he, 'what would be done, if I should rule: we should fare the war-shield over all the peopled parts, rob all wealth and burn down the abodes so thoroughly that never a cot should be left standing, and thus

pay the bonders for their betrayal of their lord. Methinks many a one would get loose from the flock, if he saw home to his house, and the reek and flame thereof, and wotted unclearly what tidings were to tell of his bairns and women and old folk, their fathers, mothers, and other kindred.' . . . But when King Olaf heard the eagerness of the folk, he craved hearing, and said: 'Forsooth the bonders are full worthy of being dealt with, even as ye will; they know this withal, that I have done as much as burning them in their abodes, and have laid upon them other heavy punishments. I have done this, that I have burnt them within, when they had gone away from their faith, and taken up blood-offerings, and would not yield to my words; but then had we God's right to awreak; whereas now is this treason much less of worth, though they hold not their troth to me; though for sooth it is, that it will not be deemed beseeeming to those who will be men of mandom. Yet I am here somewhat more free to grant them some release, when they misdo against me, than then, when they did hatefully against God. Therefore it is my will that men go forth peacefully, and do no deeds of war-work.'" (Chapter 217.)

PAGE 63. *Lord, thy men have down-trodden My corn-field.*

"Whenas the king sought down from the fell, there was there in their way a homestead called Sula, in the upper dwelling of the Verdale folk. Now when they drew down towards the homestead, there were acres lying beside the way, and the king bade his men fare quietly, and not to spoil for the bonder what was his own. And this men did well, while the king was anigh; but the companies that came after gave no heed to this, and men so overran the acre that it was all laid down to earth. The bonder who dwelt there was called Thorgeir Fleck. He had two sons well grown toward manhood. Thorgeir gave to the king a right good welcome, and to his men withal, and offered him all the cheer that he had stuff to. The king took this in good part, and asked Thorgeir for tidings, what was toward in the land, or whether any gathering would be made against him. Thorgeir said that a great host had been drawn together there in Thrandheim, and that landed-men had come there both from the south of the land, and from the north from Halogaland; 'but I wot not,' says he, 'whether they be minded to set that host against thee, or elsewhere.' Then he made plaint to the king of his scathe, and of the unquiet of the king's men, in that they had beaten down and trodden all his acres. The king said it was ill hap that harm had been done to him. Thereafter the king rode to where the acre had

been upstanding, and saw that it was all laid to the ground. He rode round about and said: 'I look forward to this, goodman, that God will right thy loss, and that this field will be better in another week's time.' And even as the king had said, that acre was of the best. The king tarried there the night, and arrayed his journey the next morning. He says that goodman Thorgeir shall fare with him, but Thorgeir bade his two sons for the journey. The king says they should not fare with him, but the lads would go, and the king bade them abide behind. But whereas they would not be letted, the king's courtiers would bind them. The king said when he saw that: 'Let them fare; they will come back again.' And it went with the boys even as the king had said." (Chapter 224.)

PAGE 64. *Lord, what guerdon awaits us, Who follow?*

Olaf's answer to this question recalls the words of Ibsen's Brand in reply to a similar question from those who have followed him into the mountains.

"How long the war will last?
As long as life, till ye have cast
All ye possess before the Lord,
And slain the Spirit of Accord;
Until your stiff will bend and bow,
And every coward scruple fall
Before the bidding: Nought or All!"

Another suggestion is found in the words of Garibaldi to the men who followed him from Rome, and asked what their reward should be: "Fame, sete, marcie forzate, battaglie, e morte."

PAGE 65. *The skalds sang at the prospect At eventide.*

"Olaf's favorite skald, Sighvat, was at that time on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but three others, Tormod Kolbrunarskald, Tortinn Mund, and Gissur Guldbraarskald, were with him on the march."

PAGE 67. *Tore Bjarköi.*

See introductory Note on *The Summer March*.

PAGE 68. *Norsemen will sing it in ages Far distant.*

Olaf said: "Ye shall be here, and see the tidings which here shall be done; then there will be no need for others to tell you the tale, for ye shall be the tellers thereof, and sing of it thereafter."

PAGE 70. IN THE CAMP.

The material of this Song is provided by Chapters 212 and 215 of the Saga of Olaf the Holy.

"Two men are named, one hight Gowk-Thorir, and the other Afrafasti; they were way-layers, and the most of robbers, and they had with them thirty men of their fashion. These brethren were bigger and stronger than other men, nor did they lack for boldness and stout heart. They heard of the host that was faring over the land there, and they said between them, that it would be handy rede to fare to the king and to follow him to his own land, and there to go into a folk-battle with him, and thus to approve themselves; for erst had they never been in battles such as were of hosts arrayed, and they were wistful exceeding to see the battles of the king. This rede their fellows liked well, and so they made their journey to find the king.

"And when they came there, they went with their band before the king, and all these fellows stood all-weaponed. They greeted him, and he asked what men they were. They named themselves, and said that they were men of that land. And therewithal they upbore their errand and bade the king to fare with him.

"The king said that it seemed to him that of such men there would be good following; 'therefore I am fain,' says he, 'to take such men; but are ye Christian men?' says he.

"Answers Gowk-Thorir, saying that he was neither Christian nor heathen: 'We fellows have no other faith than this, that we trust to our might and main, and our victory-goodhap; and that worketh enough for us.' The king answers: 'It is great scathe that men of such valiant bearing trow not in Christ, their Shaper.' Answered Thorir: 'Is there any one in thy company, king, of the men of Christ, who hath waxed more in one day than we brethren?'

"The king bade them be christened and take the right faith therewith: 'And follow me thereafter, and I shall make you men of mickle worship; but if ye will not this, then fare ye back about your business.'

"Afrafasti answers, saying that he will take no christening; and therewithal they turn away. Then said Gowk-Thorir: 'It is a great shame indeed that this king should make us castaways of his company; for I never was before whereas I was not partaker against any other man; never shall I go back as things now stand.'

"So they threw themselves in company with the other mark-men, and followed the host.

"And now King Olaf maketh his way westward towards the Keel.

"Then they brought their host out to Staff. And when the king came upon the Staff-mere he made a halt; and there he heard of a truth that the bonders fared with an host against him, and that he would have battle speedily. Then the king took the muster of his host, and the tale of the men was scored, and there were found to be in the host nine hundred heathen men. So when the king knew this he bade them let themselves be christened, saying he will not have heathen men in his battle. 'We will not,' said he, 'trust in the multitudes. In God will we trust, for by his might and mercy shall we gain the victory; but I will not blend heathen folk up with my men.'

"But when the heathen heard this, they took counsel together, and at last four hundred took christening, but five hundred gainsaid Christ's law, and that host turned back to their own country. Then stepped forward the brethren Gowk-Thorir and Afrafasti with their band, and offered the king their aid once more. He asked if they had already taken christening, and Gowk-Thorir said it was not so. The king bade them take christening and the new faith, or go their ways otherwise. So then they turned away and had a talk between them, and took counsel together what rede they should take up. Then spake Afrafasti: 'So is it to be said of my mind, that I will not turn back. I will fare to the battle, and give my aid to one side or other; but to me it makes no odds on which side I be.' Then said Gowk-Thorir: 'If I shall fare to the battle, then will I give aid to the king, for he stands in the greatest need of help; but if I am to trow in some god or other, why should it be worse to me to trow in White-Christ than in any other god? Now it is my counsel that we should let us be christened, if the king deemeth that a great matter, and let us afterwards go into the battle with him.' This they all yeasaid, and go to the king to tell him that they are willing to take christening. So they were christened of the clerks and confirmed thereafter, and the king took them into the laws of his body-guard, and said they should be under his banner in the battle."

PAGE 78. THE KING'S PRAYER.

This beautiful Song reveals the workings of the King's mind on the eve of the battle which is to determine the fate of his cause. If anything further were needed to enlist our sympathies in his behalf, it would be provided by the deeply-moving self-revelation of this Prayer. In this fervent outpouring we get a glimpse of the inmost recesses of his soul, and see the working of the motives by which he is actuated. Standing in the shadow of imminent death, the deep humility of this utterance,

its confession of the hot-blooded deeds of a violent past, its utter submission to the will of God, and its vision of a future in which his descendants "foothold may find where I slipped," we see revealed those traits which endeared him to memory after his death, and made of him the national Hero and Saint. This penetration into the heart and soul of Olaf marks the genius of Björnson more clearly, perhaps, than anything else in the poem.

PAGE 81. THE ARMY AWAKENS.

Now dawns the morning of the fateful day (August 31, 1030). "The night that King Olaf lay among his host as is aforesaid, he waked long, and prayed to God for himself and his host, and slept but little. Against dawn there fell heaviness upon him, and when he awoke, up ran the day. The king deemed it somewhat early to rouse the host. Then he asked where was Thormod the Skald. He was anigh there, and gave answer, and asked what the king would with him. The king said: 'Tell us some song.' Thormod sat up and sang out right high, so that it was heard throughout all the host." (Chapter 220.)

PAGE 81. *Bjarkemaal*.

The two stanzas here given are in the translation of Morris and Magnusson. "*Bjarkemaal* was a battle-song known throughout Norway. It bore the name of Bödvar Bjarke, one of the warriors of Rolf Krake. The saga relates that Rolf Krake with his warriors gave aid to his step father, the Swedish king Adils, against the Norwegian king Aale; hence Rolf's warriors in the song are called Adils' followers. Among these warriors were Haar den Hardgreipe (High the hard-gripping) and Hroly Skjotande (Hrolf of the shooting); the best known were Bödvar Bjarke and Hjalte. It was Bjarke or Hjalte who aroused the host with the so called *Bjarkemaal* on the night when Rolf Krake was attacked by his brother-in-law, Hjartvar, and slain in the battle with all his heroes. The battle is here called 'Hilda's play;' Hilda was a valkyrie. *Bjarkemaal*, which is a call to battle, is well fitted to the situation here, and its stirring words are likened to the mail-clad valkyries ('*Bjarkemaal's* battle clad maidens'), because the valkyries were pictured as hovering in full armor over the fighters, urging them to battle, and bearing away the slain. These conjuring words arouse in the host memories of the valorous deeds of their forefathers, bringing before their gaze

*Visions in marching array
Of our forefathers forth-faring
To fight.*

Life stirs in the camp, and the men are impelled to plunge into battle for the beloved land, to which they have come home, and which lies bright before them in the autumn sun—to plunge into battle for the king and against ‘Odin his wiles,’ ‘e’en as in the songs of old.’ Bjarke-maal has quite a good deal to say about Odin’s wiliness and treachery.” (J. Mörländ.)

PAGE 83. *The King a ring from his arm.*

“The king thanked him for his glee, and sithence the king took a gold ring weighing half a mark and gave it to Thormod. Thormod thanked the king for his gift, and said: ‘A good king have we, but it is a hard matter now to see through, how long-lived the king may be; and it is my boon, king, that thou let us part nevermore, alive or dead.’

“The king answered: ‘All we shall fare together, while I rule over it, if ye choose not to part from me.’

“Thormod said: ‘This I look for, king, whether the peace be better or worser, that I shall be standing near to you, while I have the choice, whatever we may hear of Sigvat, where he may be faring with Gold-enhilt.’” (Chapter 220.)

PAGE 83. *Certainly Sigvat this day.*

“The king heard that and answered: ‘No need to jeer at Sigvat for not being here. Oft has he followed me well; now will he pray for us, and we shall yet stand in sore need thereof.’

“Thormod says: ‘It may be, king, that now thou standest most of all in need of prayers, but thin would it be about the banner-staff, if all thy courtmen were now on the Rome-road; and indeed it was true, that we would be talking then how that no one might get place because of Sigvat, howsoever one might wish to speak to thee.’” (Chapter 218.)

PAGE 85. *Stiklestad.*

The scene of the great battle is about a hundred kilometres north of Throndhjem, in Verdalen, near an arm of the Throndhjem Fjord. A commemorative column erected in 1805 marks the spot where King Olaf fell. The landscape is gently rolling, with mountains in view toward the west, and glimpses of the fjord in the east. It may be reached by rail from Throndhjem in about three hours.

PAGE 87. *Faithful men.*

The King's final exhortation to his followers, which is clothed in words of such tender and appealing beauty in Björnson's poem, is given in the Saga as follows:

"We have an host good and great, and although the bonders have an host somewhat more, yet will fate rule the victory. I have to make known unto you that I shall not flee from this battle; I shall either overcome the bonders, or shall fall here else. And this I pray, that that lot come up which God sees will be for me the gainfullest. We shall trust in this, that we have a more rightful cause to plead than the bonders; and this furthermore, that God will make free our own to us after this battle, or else will give us a reward mickle more for the loss that we here get, than we ourselves know how to pray for. But if it be my lot to have aught to say after the battle, then shall I reward each one of you according to his work's-worth, and according to the way whereas each goeth forth in the battle; for then, if we gain the victory, there will be enough to share between you, both of lands and chattels, which are now in the hands of my foemen. Let us make the hardest of onslaughts at first; for swiftly there will be a shifting, though odds be mickle, and we have to hope for victory from speedy dealing; whereas that will fall heavy on us, if we have to fight unto weariness, so that men thereof become unfightworthy. For we shall have less fresh folk than they, to go forth in turn, while some shield themselves and rest. But if we make the brunt so hard that they turn aback who are foremost, then will each fall across the other, and their mishap will be the greater, the more they are together."

PAGE 90. THE COMING OF ARNLJOT.

This Song is based upon Chapter 227 of the O. H. Saga.

"It befell again, when King Olaf was come to Sticklestead, that a certain man came to him. But this was nought wondrous, in so far that many men came to the king out of the countrysides there, but it was deemed for new tidings, whereas this man was unlike unto other men of them who had come to the king as then. He was a man so high, that none of the others were more than up to the shoulder of him; he was a very goodly man to look upon, and of fair hair. He was well-weaponed, and had a full fair helm and a ring-byrny, and a red shield, and was girt with a fair-wrought sword; he had in hand a gold-inlaid great spear, the shaft thereof was so thick that a good handful it was. This man went before the king and greeted him, and asked if he would

have help of him. The king asked what was his name and kindred, and whence of lands.

"He answers: 'I have kindred in Iamtland and Helsingland; I am called Arnliot Gellini; and that most I can to tell thee, that I gave some furtherance to those men of thine whom thou sentest to Iamtland to crave scat there; and I handed over to them a silver dish which I sent thee for a token that I was willing to be thy friend.'

"Then asked the king if Arnliot were a man christened or not. But he said this of his troth, that he trowed in his might and main. 'And that belief has served me full well hitherto; but now I am minded rather to trow in thee, O king.'

"The king answered: 'If thou wilt trow in me, then thou shalt believe in what I teach thee. Thou shalt believe this, that Jesus Christ has created heaven and earth and all men, and that to him shall fare after death all those who are good, and who believe aright.'

"Arnliot answered: 'I have heard tell of the White-Christ, but I am not well learned in his doings, nor where he ruleth; so I will now believe all that thou hast to tell me, and I will leave all my matter in thine hand.'

"Then Arnliot was christened, and the king taught him as much of the faith as he deemed was most needful, and arrayed him to the vanward battle-array, and before his own banner. There, too, were Gowk Thorir and Afrafasti and their fellows."

PAGE 95. THE BATTLE OF STIKLESTAD.

The story of the King's dream before the battle is thus related in Chapter 226 of the O. H. Saga:

"But when King Olaf had done arraying his host, then were the bonders come nowhere nigh as yet. Then said the king that the whole host should sit down and rest them. And King Olaf himself sat him down, and all his host, and they lay at their ease. He leaned back and laid his head on the knee of Finn Arnison. Then sleep ran over him, and that was for a while.

"Then they saw the heap of the bonders, how their host sought on to meet them, and had set up its banners; and the greatest multitude of men was that. Then Finn roused the king, and told him the bonders were making for them. And when the king awoke, he said: 'Why didst thou wake me, Finn, nor leave me to have my dream out?'

"Finn answered: 'Thou wouldst not be dreaming such, as that it should not be more due for thee to wake, and be ready for the host

that fareth upon us. Or dost thou not see now whereto the bonder-crowd hath gotten?’

“The king answers: ‘They are not so near yet, as that it were not better I had slept.’

“Then said Finn: ‘What didst thou dream, king, whereof thou deemest it so mickle amiss, that thou shouldst not wake up of thyself?’

“Then the king told his dream; he thought he saw a high ladder, and that he walked up the same, up aloft so long, that he deemed he saw the heavens open, and even thither the ladder reached: ‘And I was even then come to the topmost rung, when thou didst call me.’

“Finn answers: ‘To me nought seemeth the dream so good as thou deemest it; for I am minded to think that this forebodeth thee for fey, if that which came before thee were aught else than mere dream-fooling.’”

PAGE 97. *The King knew Kalf Arnesson.*

“Now when either host stood face to face and men knew each other, the king said: ‘Why art thou there, Kalf; whereas we parted friends south in Mere? It beseems thee but ill to be fighting against us, or to shoot death-shot into our host, whereas here be thy four brethren?’

“Kalf answers: ‘Much fareth otherwise now, king, than were best beseeming. In such wise didst thou part from us, that need was to make peace with them who were left behind; and now must each be whereas he is set. But we two should yet make peace together, if I might rule.’

“Then said Finn: ‘That is a mark of Kalf, that if he speaketh well, he is minded to do ill.’

“The king said: ‘Maybe, Kalf, that thou wilt peace now; but me-seemeth that nought peacefully now ye bonders are doing.’ Then answered Thorgeir of Kvistead: ‘Ye shall now have such peace as many a man hath had afore of you, and now shall ye pay therefor.’

“Answered the king: ‘Thou needest not be so eager for our meeting—for nowise shall victory over us be fated for thee to-day. Whereas I have raised thee up to might from a little man.’” (Chapter 237.)

PAGE 99. *On, on, King’s men.*

“Therewith came Thorir Hund with his company, and went forth before the banner, and cried out: ‘Forth, forth, Bonder-men!’ And the bonder-men let out the war-whoop, and shot both arrows and spears. And then the king’s men set up the war-whoop; and when that was over, they egged each other on as they had been taught to do before, and said: ‘Forth, forth, Christ’s men, Cross-men, King’s men!’ And

when the bonders heard that, even they who stood out in the wing, they cried the same cry as they heard these call out. And when the others of the bonder-host heard this, they thought that these last were the king's men, and bore weapons upon them, so that they fought between themselves, and many men fell before they were aware how it was." (Chapter 238.)

PAGE 102. *In the arch of heaven Blood-red the sun shone.*

"Fair was the weather, and the sun shone in the clear heaven. But when the battle began, the heaven was besmitten by redness, and the sun withal; and before it cleared off, it grew mirk as night." (Chapter 238.) An eclipse of the sun, which was total in Verdalen, lasted from 1.31 P.M. until 4.58 P.M., August 31, 1030, thus fixing definitely the day and hour of the battle.

PAGE 103. *One man bided, Tore Hund.*

"Thorir Hund had fared last with his company, for he was to watch that the host should not slink back, when the war-whoop came up and the foemen's folk were seen." (Chapter 236.)

PAGE 104. *Then a madness Seized on Tore.*

"Tore Hund, like Haarek of Tjotta, had been bound to Olaf by the feudal tie, and both had accepted Christianity, but the Halogalanders held their Christianity lightly, having accepted it in a calculating spirit, out of fear for the king's anger. Tore Hund was a treacherous and crafty man, and he is depicted in the saga as skilled in witchcraft. It is, therefore, in consonance with the ideas prevailing at the time that Tore Hund should steel his followers by witchcraft, to prevent them from being driven to flight. His peculiar troll-like character causes the old heathendom to contend in his mind with the new Christianity, which threatens the rule of the Æsir. He believes—as many of his time believed—both in Odin and Thor and in Christ. This conflict between the old faith and the new, made known to him by his own doubts, now takes the form of a battle between the old gods and Christ, as he watches the King's army contend with the bonders' army on the plain. The gods take part in the battle of men; it seems to him as if the divine powers of both the old and the new religions seek to destroy each other, and vanish in the yawning abyss of annihilation (Ginnungagap). What he sees and thinks, finds also expression in his speech. By his wild words, naming in the same breath the good and evil powers of the old and the new religions, familiar or half-familiar names, arousing terror or

defiance, hatred or loathing, he makes his followers mad with the wild lust of destruction. Christ supports Loki, the Fenris-wolf, the Midgard-serpent, and Ymer from whom the giants' brood descended, in the fight against the high Æsir, and he even represents Satan as fighting on the side of Christ, and lets cold Naastrond burst into flame. Even the darkened sun seems to fight against the Æsir. This discourse, which reveals the confusion of ideas in an agitated and gloomy soul, spurs his warriors to Berserk fury, driving them on to slay and slay again before the world comes to an end. 'All now should perish, Even remembrance.'" (J. Mörland.)

PAGE 109. *Fallen was Arnljot.*

"Then set on the bonder-host from all sides. They hewed who stood the foremost; but they, who there were next, thrust with spears, or arrows, or hurled stones, or hand-axes, or shaft-flints. And soon there befell a battle man-scathing, and much folk fell on either side.

"In the first brunt fell Arnljot Gellini, Gowk-Thorir, and Afrafasti, and all their company, but each had slain his man first, or two, or some more." (Chapter 238.)

PAGE 110. *The King behind a shield-wall Hitherto had battled.*

"When King Olaf went forth out of the shield-burg, and into the vanward of his battle, and the bonders might look into the face of him, then they were filled with dread and their hands dropped." (Chapter 238.)

PAGE 111. *Torgeir of Kvistad.*

"Then fought King Olaf all dauntlessly. He hewed on Thorgeir of Kviststead, a landed-man, who is aforenamed, athwart the face, and sheared asunder the nose-guard of the helm of him, and clave the head below the eyes, so that it nearly flew off. And when he fell, the king said: 'Yea: is that true, which I said thee, Thorgeir, that thou wouldst have no victory in our dealings?'" (Chapter 239.)

PAGE 111. *Troll-fur.*

"Thorir Hound had had the Finn-journey these two winters, and had been both winters for long on the fells, and had gotten him measureless wealth. He had had many kinds of chafferings with the Finns. He had let make for himself twelve coats of reindeer-skin with so mickle wizardry that no weapon could bite on them, yea, mickle less than on a ring-byrny." (Chapter 204.) "King Olaf hewed on Thorir Hound

right across the shoulders ; the sword did not bite, but it seemed as if dust flew out of the reindeer-skin. Hereof tells Sigvat:

*The bounteous king most clearly
Himself found how the wise-work
Of the witchcrafty Finn-folk
Saved the big-fashioned Thorir ;
When the scatterer of the fire
Of the mast-knop smote the shoulders
Of Hound, and the sword gold-broidered
Blunted, would bite in nowise.*

“Then Thorir smote at the king, and sundry blows they gave and took ; but the sword of the king bit not, whereas the reindeer-skin was in the way, yet was Thorir hurt in the hand.” (Chapter 240.)

PAGE 111. *Thou, Björn, smite the dog down.*

“The king said to Bjorn the Marshal : ‘Smite thou the hound whom iron will bite not.’ Bjorn turned the axe in his hand and smote with the hammer thereof, and the blow took Thorir on the shoulder and was a full mighty blow, and Thorir staggered thereat. . . . Then Thorir Hound thrust a spear at Bjorn the Marshal, and smote him in the midst, and gave him a bane-wound. Then spake Thorir : ‘Thus bait we the bears.’” (Chapter 240.)

PAGE 112. *There fell also Gissur.*

“Therewith fell also Thorfin Mouth, and Gizur Goldbrow ; but on him had two men set, and one he slew and the other he hurt, or ever he fell himself.” (Chapter 229.)

PAGE 112. *There was also Tormod Fatally wounded.*

In making Tormod die on the field in defence of the King, Björnson departs from the saga-version, which reads as follows: “Thormud Coal-brow-skald was in the battle under the banner of the king. And when the king was fallen, and the onset was at its fiercest, then fell the king’s company each by the other, but most of them were wounded who stood up. Thormod was sore hurt, and he did then as other men, who all drew aback from there where they deemed was most risk of life, but some ran. Then arose the fight which is called Day’s Brunt, wherein there joined all the host of the king that was still fightworthy. But Thormod came not into that battle, for that he was unmeet for fighting, both through wounds and weariness ; but he stood there beside his

fellows, though he might do nothing else. Then was he smitten by an arrow in the left side. Then he broke the arrow-shaft from off him, and went away from the battle—home to the houses, and came to a certain barn which was a mickle house. Thormod had a naked sword in his hand; and as he went in, there came a man out against him, and said: ‘Herewithin they go on wondrous ill, with whining and howling; and a great shame it is that valiant men should not thole their wounds. Maybe the king’s men have gone forth on right well, but all unmanly they bear their wounds.’ Thormod answered: ‘What is thy name?’ He named himself Kimbi. Answered Thormod: ‘Wert thou in the battle?’ ‘I was,’ says he, ‘with the bonders; the better side, to wit.’ ‘Art thou hurt at all?’ says Thormod. ‘Little,’ says Kimbi, ‘or wert thou in the battle?’ Thormod answers: ‘I was, and with them who had the better.’

“Kimbi saw that Thormod had a golden ring on his arm, and he said: ‘Thou must be of the king’s men; so hand me the gold ring, and I shall hide thee; for the bonders will slay thee, if thou come in their way.’ Thormod says: ‘Take the ring, if thou mayst reach it; now have I lost more.’ Kimbi reached forth his hand, and would take the ring. Thormod swept his sword, and sheared the hand from off him. And so it is said, that Kimbi bore his wound nowise better than the others whom he had been wyting before; and therewith Kimbi went away.

“But Thormod sat him down in the barn, and sat there a while, and hearkened to the talk of men. This was most spoken there, that each man sayeth that which he deemed he had seen in the battle, and the talk was of onsets of men; and some praised most the valour of King Olaf, and some named no less other men. Then sang Thormod:

*‘Bold was the heart of Olaf,
Through blood the king forth waded;
At Sticklestead the wrought steel
Bit, and the host craved battle.
All pines of the gale of Jalfad
Save the very king, there saw I
To spare themselves; yet most men
In the fast spear-drift did prove them.’*

“Thormod walked away thereafter to a certain outhouse and went thereinto, and within there were already many men sore wounded. A certain woman was tending there, and binding up the wounds of men. On the floor there was a fire, and she was warming water for the cleans-

ing of the wounds. But Thormod sat down out by the door. There one man went out as another came in of them who were busy about the wounded. Then one turned to Thormod, and looked on him and said : 'Why art thou so pale? Art thou wounded?' Then Thormod sang this stave:

*'Nay, nowise am I ruddy,
But the slim white hawk-perch' Skogul,
She hath a ruddy husband,
Of me, sore hurt, few mind them.
Thou, wont unto the murder
Of Fenja's meal: that maketh,
That with the deep spoor smart I
Of Day's brunt and Dane-weapons.'*

"Sithence Thormod stood up, and walked up to the fire, and stood there for a while. Then spake the leech to him: 'Thou, man, go out and fetch me the billets which lie outside the door.' He went out and bore in an armful of billets, and threw them down on the floor. Then the leech looked into the face of him, and said: 'Wondrously pale is this man, why art thou so?' Then sang Thormod:

*'The oak of the hawk-lands wondereth
Why we be pale: O woman!
The arrow drift I found me:
'Tis few grow fair by wounding.
It was the darksome metal,
Driven by main, flew through me;
The perilous sharp iron
Bit nigh the heart, so ween I.'*

"Then said the leech: 'Let me see thy wounds, that I may bind them up.' Then Thormod sat down and cast the clothes from him. And when the leech saw his wounds, she searched about the wound he had in his side, and she found that iron stood therein, though she knew not for sure whither the iron had turned. She had made there in a stone kettle a mess of leeks and other herbs, and sodden that together, and she gave it to the wounded to eat, and tried in that manner whether they had hollow wounds; whereas she kenned it from the leek smelling out through the wound which was in the hollow body. She bore this to Thormod and bade him eat. He answered: 'Take it away; I am not sick for grout.' Then she took a gripping tongs, and would draw out the iron; but it was fast, and stirred nowhither; and it stood

out but little because the wound was swollen. Then said Thormod: 'Shear thou up to the iron, so that it may be well caught by the tongs, and then give them to me, and let me pull at it.'

"She did as he bade. Then Thormod took a gold ring off his arm, and gave it to the leech, and bade her do with it what she would. 'The giver is good,' says he; 'King Olaf gave me the ring this morning.'

"Then Thormod took the tongs, and pulled out the arrow; and on the barbs of it lay sinews from the heart, some red, some white. And when he saw that, he said: 'Well hath the king fed us; fat am I yet at the heart-roots.' Then he sank aback and was dead. And there is an end to the tale of Thormod." (Chapters 246, 247.)

PAGE 112. *The King was in danger.*

In the saga, the death of King Olaf follows immediately upon the slaying of Björn by Tore Hund. The account is as follows: "Thorstein Shipwright smote at King Olaf with an axe, and the blow struck the left leg anigh the knee and above it. Finn Arnison smote Thorstein down forthwith. But at this wound the king leaned him up against a stone and threw away his sword, and bade God help him. Then Thorir Hund thrust a spear at him. The thrust came on him below the byrny, and ran up into the belly. Then Kalf hewed at him, and that blow took him on the left side of the neck. But men are sundered on the matter, where Kalf gave the king his wound. These three wounds the king got towards the loss of his life. But after his fall, then most all the company fell which had gone forth with the king." (Chapter 240.)

PAGE 115. THE NIGHT AFTER. *Tore Hund Sat on a rock by the King's body.*

"Thorir Hund went thereto where was the body of King Olaf, and gave lyke-help to it, laying the body down and straightening it and spreading a cloth thereover. And when he wiped the blood off the face, he said thereof afterwards, that the face of the king was so fair, that the cheeks were even as ruddy, as he were asleep; but a mickle brighter than it was afore, while he was yet alive. Then came the blood of the king on to the hand of Thorir, and ran up unto the grip where he had afore gotten his hurt; and there was no need of any binding up of that hurt henceforth, so speedy was the healing thereof. Thorir bore witness to this hap himself, when the holiness of King Olaf became known to all folk; and Thorir Hound was the first among the mighty men who had been of the host of his foes to uphold the holiness of the king." (Chapter 242.)

PAGE 116. *Among the men who the corpses scanned Was Kalf Arnesson.* "Kalf, the son of Arni, sought for his brothers who were fallen there. He came upon Thorberg and Finn, and it is the say of men that Finn hurled a sax at him, and would slay him, and spake hard words at him, and called him a peace-dastard and a lord-betrayer. Kalf gave no heed thereto, but let bear Finn away from the slain and Thorberg in like wise. Then their wounds were searched, and they had no hurt deadly-looking; they had fallen overborne by weapons and weariness. Then Kalf busied him to bring his brothers down aboard ship, and went with them himself. But so soon as he turned away, then fared away also all the host of the bonders which had their homes anigh there, out-taken such men as were busy there about their kinsmen or friends who were wounded, or about the bodies of them who had fallen. Wounded men were carried to the homestead, so that every house was full of them, and over some tents were pitched outside." (Chapter 243.)

Before the battle, the King had requested Thorgils, a peasant of the neighborhood, to take care of his body, should he fall on the battle-field. "A man is named Thorgils, son of Halma, and he was the bonder who then dwelt at Sticklestead, and was the father of Grim the Good. Thorgils offered the king his help, and to be in the battle with him. The king bade him have thanks for his offer: 'But I will, bonder, that thou be not in the battle. Grant us rather that other help, to save our men after the fight, such as be wounded; and lay out the bodies of the others, who fall in the fray. Likewise, should such hap be, bonder, that I fall in this battle, then do what service may be needful to my body, if it be not forbidden thee!'

"And Thorgils avowed to the king to do his behest." (Chapter 222.)

"Thorgils, son of Halma, and Grim, his son, fared to the fallen host in the evening, when mirk was. They took up the body of King Olaf and bore it away to a place, where there was a house-cot, little and waste, out away from the stead. They had light with them and water. So then they did the clothes off the body, and washed it, and sithence swaddled it in linen weed, and laid it down there within the house, and covered it up with wood, so that no one might see it, though men should come into the house. Then they went away and home to the stead. Many staff-carles had followed either army, and poor people who begged their meat. And the evening after the battle a many of that folk had tarried there, and when night fell, they sought harbour for themselves throughout all the houses, great and small. There was a certain blind man, of whom a tale is told; he was a poor man, and his

lad went about with him, and led him. They walked out a-doors about the stead seeking harbour, and came to that same void house, the door whereof was so low that one had nearly to creep in through it. And when the blind man came inside the house, he groped about on the floor, to find whether he might lay him down. He had a hat on his head, and the hat fell forward over his face, when he bent down. He found that before his hand there was a pool on the floor, and therewith he lifted the wet hand and set the hat right again, and therewith the wet fingers came up against his eyes. And forthwith fell so great itching on his eyelids, that he stroked the wet fingers across his very eyes. Then he betook himself out of the house again, saying there was no lying therein, for it was all wet. And when he came out of the house, he saw forthwith, first his two hands one from the other, and then all such things as were near enough for him to see in spite of night-mirk. He went home forthwith to the stead and into the guest-chamber, and there told all folk that he had got his sight, and that now he was a seeing man. But that wotted many men, that he had been long blind, for he had been there before, going about from house to house. He said that he had got his sight first when he came out of a certain house, little and wretched, 'and all was wet therewithin,' says he, 'and I groped thereinto with my hands, and I rubbed my eyes with my wet hands.' He told also where the house stood.

"But the men within there, when they heard these tidings, wondered greatly at this hap, and spoke between themselves what there could be within that house. But goodman Thorgils and his son Grim deemed they knew whence this hap would have come, and were in great dread lest the unfriends of the king should go and ransack the house. Then they stole away, and went to the house and took the body, and flitted it away and into the meadow, and hid it there, and then fared back to the stead and slept through that night." (Chapter 349.)

"Thorgils Halmason and Grim, the father and son, had in their keeping the body of King Olaf, and were much mind-sick herein, to wit, how they might so heed it, that the unfriends of the king should not mishandle the body; for they heard the bonders say as much as that the thing to be done, if the body of the king should be found, would be, to burn it or to take it out to sea and sink it in the deep.

"The father and son had seen in the night as it were a candle-light burning over the spot where the body of King Olaf lay amidst of the

fallen host, and also thereafter, wheresoever they had hidden the body, they saw ever at night a light, looking thither whereas the king was resting. They dreaded lest the unfriends of the king should seek for the body even where it was, if they saw these tokens; so therefore Thorgils and his son were wistful to bring the body away to some such place that it should be safe there. They made a chest, and wrought it in the best way they could, and laid therein the body of the king; sithence they made another lyke-chest and put into it straw and stones, so that it should be the weight of a man, and locked that chest heedfully.

“Now, when the whole host of the bonders was gone away from Sticklestead, Thorgils and Grim arrayed their journey. Thorgils got a certain rowing-ferry; they were seven or eight together, and all of them kinsmen or friends of Thorgils. They brought the body of the king on board stealthily, and put the chest under deck. That chest they also had with them, wherein were the stones, and set that on board ship, so that all men might see it; and after that they fare along the firth, with a fair wind, and came in the evening, as mirk set in, down to Nidoyce, and lay-to by the king’s pier. Then Thorgils sent men up into the town, and let tell to Bishop Sigurd that they fared there with the body of King Olaf. And when the bishop heard these tidings, he sent forth-with his men down to the bridges, where they took a rowing cutter and boarded the ship of Thorgils, and bade him hand over to them the body of the king. Then Thorgils and his men took the chest which stood upon the deck, and bore it into the cutter; whereupon these men rowed out into the firth, and there sunk down the chest.

“By this time it was the mirk of night. Thorgils and his men then rowed up the river, until the town was cleared, and laid to shore where it was called Saurlithe, which was above the town; and then they bore the body up and into a certain waste outhouse which stood there, up away from other houses, and there they waked over the body the night through. But Thorgils went down into the town, and met there men to talk to, such as had been most friends of King Olaf, and asked them if they would take over the body of the king; but no man durst to do it. Then Thorgils and Grim brought the body up along the river, and buried it in a certain sand-hill which there is, and sithence dight the place, so that no new work might be seen thereon. All this they had done before the dawn of day; and then went back to their ship and put out of the river at once, and went on their way until they came home to Sticklestead.” (Chapter 251.)

"That winter uphove the word of many men there in Thrandheim, that King Olaf was a truly holy man, and that many tokens befell at his holy relic. And then many began to make vows to King Olaf about those matters whereon they had set their hearts. From such vows many folk got bettering ; some the bettering of their health, some good speed for journeys, or other such things as were looked upon as needful." (Chapter 204.)

"Bishop Grimkel went to see Einar Thambarskelfir, and Einar gave the bishop a hearty welcome, and they spoke about many matters, and this withal, of the great tidings which had befallen in the land. And in all their talk they were of one accord together. Sithence fared the bishop up to Chippingham, and there all the folks gave him a good welcome. He speered heedfully at all the wonders that were told of King Olaf, and heard tell well thereof. Then the bishop sent word up to Sticklestead to Thorgils, and Grim, his son, and summoned them down to the town to meet him there. The father and son laid not that journey under their head, but fared down to the town to meet the bishop. And they told him all those tokens, whereof they had knowledge, and this withal, where they had bestowed the body of the king. Then the bishop sent for Einar Thambarskelfir, and he also came to the town ; and he and Einar spake with the king and with Alfiva, praying that the king would give leave to take King Olaf's body out of the earth. The king gave leave thereto, and bade the bishop go about that matter as he would. There was then mickle throng of folk in the town. So the bishop and Einar and other men with them fared thereto, whereas the body of the king was buried, and let digging be done there, and the chest was then come up well-nigh out of the earth. Many men urged that the bishop should let the chest be buried in earth at Clement's Church, and so it was done. And when twelve months and five nights were worn from the death of King Olaf, his holy relic was taken up, and again the chest was well-nigh come up out of the earth, and then the chest of King Olaf was as span-new as if it had been newly shaven. . . . Then was the body of the king borne into Clement's Church, and laid out over the high altar. The chest was wrapt in pall, and hangings of goodly web done around. And straightway many marvels befell at the holy relic of King Olaf." (Chapter 258.)

"There, in the sand-heap, where King Olaf had lain in earth, there came up a fair well, and many folk gat healing of their ills of that water. The well was built over, and that water hath ever since been heedfully

guarded. First there was made a chapel there, and the altar was reared where had been the tomb of the king; but now stands on that stead Christ Church; and Archbishop Eystein had the high altar set up on that same stead, where the king's tomb had been, when he reared the great minster which now standeth, and on that same stead had also stood the altar in the ancient Christ Church. So it is said, that Olaf's church now stands, where that waste outhouse stood where the body of King Olaf was set nightlong. That is now called Olaf's-lithe where the holy relic of the king was borne aland up from the ship, and is now in the midst of the town." (Chapter 259.)

The foregoing extracts from the Saga of Olaf the Holy, together with the Note on the Fifteenth Song, are given for the purpose of showing how the death of the King impressed even those who had fought against him. In the final scene between Kalv Arnesson and Tore, we see that doubt is already invading their minds—doubt of the justice of the cause in which they have fought, and of their conception of the King as the enemy of his country. After his death his fame as a miracle-worker grew rapidly, and tale after tale added to the legend which caused Bishop Grimkel, a year after the battle of Stiklestad, to confer official sainthood upon him. Tore was driven by remorse to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem not long thereafter, and it was Kalv who, breaking with the Danish King, went to Russia to fetch Magnus, Olaf's illegitimate son, and place him upon the throne of Norway. The reliquary of King Olaf in St. Clement's Church became a shrine for hosts of pilgrims, and the St. Olaf cult led to the erection of the great Domkirke (or cathedral) upon the site, as well as to the building of nine other churches and five monasteries in Throndhjem. The Reformation ended these pilgrimages, swept away most of the churches and monasteries, and caused the reliquary to be carried off, and the King's remains to be buried in some unknown spot. The Domkirke has been partly destroyed by fire several times, but judiciously restored, and it stands to-day the noblest monument of architecture in the Scandinavian north. It is the burial-place of many of the kings of Norway, and the place where the Eidsvold Constitution of 1814 requires the kings to be crowned, as was done in 1873 in the case of Oscar the Second, and in 1903 in the case of Haakon the Seventh.

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